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COMMENTARY
ON
ST. PAUL'S
EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

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EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

BY
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P R E F A C E.

IN the Epistle to the Ephesians we have the most mature and sustained of all the statements of Christian doctrine which have come down to us from the hand of the great apostle. In almost all his other epistles Paul is now and again, and in some of them very frequently, carried away from the particular argument which he is pursuing, in order to deal with matter of local or temporary interest to his immediate readers. But in this epistle he goes on to utter forth uninterruptedly all that has taken possession of his own mind, in reference to those matters of faith and duty which must always be of utmost concern to the members of Christ's body, who, while living upon earth, seek to have their conversation in heaven.

A commentary on such an epistle ought to be exegetical, in the fullest and most comprehensive sense of the word. It has been my endeavour in the present work to deal with all questions of textual and grammatical criticism where they arise, in so far as these seem of importance in elucidating the particular and precise meaning of the passages in which they occur. But in treating such an epistle, it has seemed to me the imperative duty of a commentator to endeavour to set forth in detail the meaning of each phrase, and to trace carefully the progress of the argument and the development of spiritual and experimental truth. In the exposition of this

epistle there is less room than in the case of most other portions of Scripture for historical, geographical, or literary illustration. It is distinctly and characteristically doctrinal, with scarcely any trace of local colouring or occasional and incidental reference. It is the task of the expositor to make everything contribute to the elucidation of those great truths, with regard to the Christian creed and conduct, which the apostle here lays down for the instruction of those who no longer need to be fed on milk nor to be taught again what are the first principles of the oracles of God.

Owing to the peculiar character of the document, it seemed desirable to give considerable attention in the introduction to several points of interest in connection with the origin and destination of the epistle. Some of these questions have been subjects of long-continued discussion, and upon several of these now, as well as in early times, there prevails a great diversity of opinion. I have sought clearly to state what these different views are, and to give as precisely as possible the reasons which have led me to adopt the conclusions at which I have arrived. The closing section of that introduction has been drawn up with care. The classification of the principal works on the epistle will, it is hoped, make the list more practically useful, and the few remarks made upon each treatise, giving the result of my own personal experience of the books referred to, may prove helpful in guiding students who wish to find their way to treatises in which the epistle is approached from some one special point of view.

JOHN MACPHERSON.

FINDHORN, *May* 1892.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

INTRODUCTION.

1. EPHESUS AND THE EPHESIAN CHURCH.

Early History. THE story of the original founding of the city of Ephesus is lost in an extremely remote antiquity. In the eleventh century before Christ, Androclus, son of the Athenian Codrus, is said to have established a Greek colony there,¹ but at a still earlier period Phœnician emigrants seem to have been attracted to it on account of its convenient situation, and to have contributed largely to its material prosperity. Their presence soon made itself felt, by impressing a special stamp upon the habits and customs of the place, and may account for many of the social and religious practices which came to be regarded as characteristic of its culture. The natural situation of the town, within easy reach from behind of the great producing districts of the time, and favoured with a conveniently central position that allowed ready egress toward Greece and Italy on the one hand, and toward the ports of the Eastern Mediterranean on the other, insured to it commercial prosperity, and steady growth in population and in political importance. The enterprising Phœnician traders would find it less difficult to effect a settlement there, inasmuch as the deities whom they worshipped were the same as, or at least very similar to, those of the earlier inhabitants of the land, and the religious modes of thought prevalent among both peoples in general harmonised. The priesthood,

¹ Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, vii. 2.

numerically large, early won and long maintained a position of uncommon influence, having from the earliest times secured the sympathy and confidence of both divisions of the population. This powerful party largely controlled the politics of the city, and determined its foreign relations almost invariably in an anti-Hellenic direction. The general tendency favoured by the Ephesians in philosophy, in religion, and in the customs of public and private life, was distinctly oriental. Even in historic times, when Ephesus had become an Ionian city, with a dominant population essentially Greek in descent and traditions, that permanent sacerdotal class succeeded in conserving the most characteristic institutions of the primitive race.

Philosophy. The oriental tincture in the Ephesian culture appears significantly in the sensuousness of its philosophy. The Ionic philosophers, in strict accordance with oriental habits of thought, made much of external sense impressions, brooded over the secrets of outward nature, and gave themselves to the study of natural phenomena. Heraclitus of Ephesus not only assumed as the primitive substance that pure ethereal fire revered in the Parsee religion, but, more decidedly perhaps than any of his predecessors, exhibited the tendency lingering among his countrymen, down to his own time, to an un-Hellenic and truly oriental sensuous mysticism. While himself an Ionian Greek, he seems to have belonged to the powerful priestly caste, and it is interesting to notice how, from the midst of the class which persistently favoured the Persian supremacy, a theory of speculative philosophy proceeded, tinged with Persian modes of thought.

Diana of the Ephesians. The Ephesian philosophy was but a refining reflection upon the popular religion. If traces of oriental influence are apparent in the speculations of the Ionic natural philosophers, the presence of important elements, transferred bodily from grosser religious systems of the East, is still more conspicuous in the religious institutions of Ephesus. The deity most revered and invariably conspicuous in the worship of the ancient Phœnician traders, whether of Carthage or Tyre, was Astarte, under one

aspect at least the goddess of fruitfulness, and essentially similar in her attributes to the nature goddess Cybele, so prominent in the worship of the earlier inhabitants. It would seem that the Ionian colonists, when they first took possession of Ephesus, brought with them the Greek Artemis, and dedicated to her worship a temple in the upper part of the city, which was distinctively their own. Meanwhile, however, clustering around the harbour, the original population of mixed nationalities continued to hold their ground, and celebrated their religious rites in their own sanctuary, dedicated to that goddess of fruitfulness in nature which answered at once to the Semitic Astarte and the native Lydian Cybele. Tradition connects the introduction of this worship into Ephesus with an expedition of Amazons from Cappadocia, and women of Amazonian descent are said to have been found in later times among the priestesses of the Ephesian goddess. This would associate the religion of the old Ephesians directly with that of Assyria and Phœnicia, and would warrant us in assigning it a place, which its main characteristics also seem to justify, among the religions of the heathen Semites. When we thus comprehend the origin and historical development of the Ephesian religion, we shall understand how readily those who from time to time, in the pursuit of commerce, settled in this city, would be drawn towards those amongst whom they came, by affinities of religion if not of race.—At first sight, indeed, it would seem that there was little in common between the pure Greek goddess Artemis, known subsequently under the Roman name of Diana, and the sensuous oriental goddess of the Ephesians. Yet these two had at least this in common, that they had been originally conceived of as representatives of the moon goddess; and many of the diversities in their character and worship are traceable to the prominence given in the one case to one, and in the other case to another of the influences attributed to the moon in the realm of nature. The special temperament of the Ionians, too, would predispose them to amalgamate gradually the sensuous rites of the old Ephesians with the more pure and simple cultus which they had carried with them from Greece. Light-hearted and

frivolous, as compared with the other Greek tribes,¹ they were easily fascinated with the poetic colouring and mystic symbolism of the religion of those among whom they had come to dwell, and were thus the more inclined to see resemblances between, or even to persuade themselves of the essential identity of, the deities to whom respectively they offered supreme reverence. As years rolled on, the purer reminiscences of the Greek Artemis passed away, and the one prominent object of worship, in the lower and upper city alike, was that Diana of the Ephesians, who bore the name but reflected scarcely any of the attributes of the sister of Apollo. This adoption of the goddess universally honoured throughout the great oriental empires as the patron deity of the city, may also have commended itself to the Ephesians on the grounds of political expediency.² When Croesus of Lydia was preparing to lay siege to Ephesus, the declaration that the city was sacred to Diana, the Asiatic nature goddess, was sufficient to secure from that potentate an immediate confirmation of all her ancient liberties. Throughout the periods of Lydian and Persian supremacy, Ephesus, as the city of Diana, continued to enjoy exceptional advantages. Under Roman rule special favour was shown to Ephesus, and, as capital of proconsular Asia, it figures prominently in the history of those later times. Though showing a despicable

¹ Ebrard, in his *Christian Apologetics* (3 vols., Edin. 1886-1887, vol. ii. p. 251), marks very emphatically the characteristic distinction in disposition and consequent divergence in history between the Ionic and the Doric Greek. Speaking of the Ionian colonists of B.C. 1000, he says: "In Asia Minor the Greeks fell in with the heathen Semitic worship of the goddess of birth (Lydian, Cybele; Phrygian, Great Mother; Teuerian, Idean Mother; Phœnician, Cythra or Astarte); and they adopted her, changing her, however, with their innate national sense of beauty and decorum, from an obscene goddess of grossness into the youthful goddess of love and gracefulness, Aphrodite." This statement referring to so early a period is of course purely hypothetical; but when we descend to historic times, we find that such Hellenic refinements, if ever attempted, had produced no appreciable permanent effect upon the gross orientalism of the worship offered to Diana of the Ephesians.

² Stark, in his article "Diana" (Schenkel, *Bibellexicon*, i. 606), regards the statement made by the Ephesians to Croesus, as to their city having been consecrated to Artemis, as a scheme deliberately contrived, by the advice of their tyrant, to secure their safety in the emergency. He also represents the combination of the Greek Artemis and the oriental nature goddess as the result of the adoption of this proposal. Ephesus was now distinctively a

servility in their eagerness to accommodate themselves to the favoured and fashionable religions of the age, the Ephesians continued to glory in their loyal attachment to their great Diana.

Jewish Colonies. From the earliest times Jewish colonies had settled in Asia Minor. This central district, through which all the main highways passed on which was carried the traffic of the world in its transit from east and west, presented peculiar attractions to a people in whom the instincts of trade were already abnormally developed. Special facilities thus afforded by the natural situation of the province were eagerly taken advantage of by the crowds of Jewish adventurers, who thronged all the leading cities, and pushed themselves forward in all the professions, trades, and industries that were open to them. The Jews of Asia soon became a wealthy community, and were able to purchase for themselves privileges which made it possible for them more rapidly to amass wealth and more securely to hold what they had acquired. In Ephesus, the capital of the province, they found a peculiarly inviting sphere. Those Jews residing there had enjoyed for well nigh three centuries before the time of Paul the full rights of citizens, and were even entitled to call themselves by the name of Ephesians. And notwithstanding efforts made by the local authorities, naturally jealous of such extraordinary favour shown to settlers among them, whose presence did not always seem desirable, their case was favourably represented at court by those who, from personal inclination or because of liberal contributions to meet financial embarrassments, were prepared to champion the cause of the Hebrew. By means

sacred city, and all the inhabitants, realising the condition of their immunity from harassment from without, became united in their devotion to the one distinctively national deity. We should rather say that the process of amalgamation tending to unification, which had been going on for five hundred years, was by this historical occurrence completed and brought to perfection. Henceforth Ephesus became a widely known and well accredited sacred city, to which pilgrims and devotees from all parts of the world were attracted. Miletus was then the great trade emporium of the colony, and when, amid the convulsions of a subsequent age, Miletus fell, its merchants transferred their residence to Ephesus, which soon rose to be the first commercial city of Asia.

of large gifts bestowed upon the Roman governor, the Jews in Ephesus secured exemption from military service, were excused from attendance as witnesses in court on the Sabbath, were permitted to erect courts with jurisdiction over members of their own community, and were left in the undisturbed observance of their own religious worship. This favour they enjoyed under all the emperors down to Hadrian, for even when temporary severities were exercised upon the Jews of Rome, no abatement of privilege was experienced by their more fortunate brethren in Ephesus. But all this long-continued prosperity only intensified the hatred of the surrounding Greek population, from whom they kept apart, intermingling neither in their joys nor in their sorrows, maintaining an attitude of indifference and estrangement. The return of the great festivals, which attracted crowds of devout Jews to the Holy City, kept alive the sense of their separateness from all other peoples on the earth. Even in the Greek city, the Jewish synagogue constituted the national and religious centre of the Jewish commercial life, and there the events occurring in Palestine, in so far as they might affect the interests of the race, would be eagerly and passionately discussed.

First Chris- During the early years of the Christian era, tian Converts. therefore, there were Jews in Ephesus, constituting a large and influential section of the community, who must have kept themselves regularly informed about the stirring events that had occurred in Jerusalem. It is quite evident that many of them must have been aware of the claims advanced on behalf of "the Prophet of Nazareth," and that most of them would be eager to hear what the missionaries of this new doctrine had to tell. Even before any Christian evangelist visited Ephesus, Jews from that city had listened in Jerusalem to the preaching of the apostles. From Cappadocia, Pontus, Phrygia, Pamphylia, and from the province of Asia itself, there were worshippers present in Jerusalem at the great Pentecost, when, by the preaching of Peter, three thousand converts were won to the Christian faith. It is in the highest degree probable that Ephesus, the capital of Asia, was largely represented on that occasion, and that the Ephesian Jewish converts of the day of Pentecost formed the

nucleus of the Christian Church in that city. It need not surprise us that, in so large a city as Ephesus, there should have existed alongside of those who had received the gospel from the apostles in Jerusalem, others who, though detached from the unbelieving Jewish community, had no further knowledge of Christian truth than had been shadowed forth by the Baptist's teaching (Acts xix. 1-7). Disciples of John had existed alongside of the disciples of Christ, assuming quite a distinctive position (Matt. ix. 14); and in later years, as Hemerobaptists, Mandeans, and Sabeans, they continued to maintain an anti-Jewish and anti-Christian position, until at last, through the persistence of their opposition to those religious systems based upon a direct divine revelation, they sank back into the dark and degraded superstitions of paganism. Those Hellenist Jews of Ephesus had not apparently taken up any positively anti-Christian attitude. Interpreting more correctly the spirit of their Master, they seem rather to have accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah; but they do not appear to have learnt more of Him than John had himself taught them. It is therefore precisely what we might have expected, that such men would hasten to the first accredited teacher of the new faith, that their instruction might be resumed at that point at which so many years before it had been interrupted. They could not, indeed, have remained ignorant of the facts of Jesus' death and resurrection, but even the converts of the day of Pentecost had evidently failed in making them understand the significance of the outpouring of the Spirit as the inauguration of a new dispensation.

Paul first at Ephesus. It was not till near the close of his second missionary journey, in A.D. 54, that Paul visited Ephesus (Acts xviii. 19), and even then, beyond addressing a meeting in the Jewish synagogue and leaving behind him Aquila and Priscilla to confirm and instruct inquirers, there was nothing done to secure this important stronghold for the Christian cause. About a year and a half probably passed before Paul was able again to visit Ephesus, but meanwhile the disciples of John, the more advanced Christian converts of the great Pentecost, and the fully instructed Roman Jewish

believers, Aquila and Priscilla, continued, in their several spheres and according to their proportion of faith, to advance the cause of Christ in the chief city of Asia. That Paul had been quick to perceive the importance of Ephesus, as affording a vantage ground for Christian activity, cannot be doubted.

Long
Residence. So soon, therefore, as he had, in the beginning of his third journey, performed the indispensably necessary task of strengthening the churches already established in Galatia and Phrygia, he hastened straight from the last-named province by the great north-eastern high road through Sardis to Ephesus.¹ We may well suppose that Paul passed rapidly through the "upper" or properly "inland" districts of Phrygia, inasmuch as the inhabitants spoke a peculiar language of their own, and would therefore find the apostle's Greek unintelligible. Even in the parts of Phrygia nearest to the centres of civilisation, Greek did not come into use until well nigh a century after the apostle's journey through these parts. In Phrygia, therefore, just as in Lycaonia, ignorance of the language would make prolonged and successful work on the part of Paul impossible; and so, after visiting a few of the principal cities where the Jewish colonies might be considerable, the apostle pushed forward to the coast, where he could find Jews and Greeks able to understand his speech, and in some measure prepared for the story and the doctrines which he had to teach and to tell. In Ephesus itself he would be immediately surrounded by those whom his earlier preaching had impressed, and by the fruits of the ministry there of Priscilla and Aquila. The twelve disciples of John having received Christian instruction from Paul, were endowed with gifts of tongues and prophecy, and were thus fitted in an eminent degree to be coadjutors of the apostle in his great work of evangelisation in this heathen city. In accordance with his invariable custom, Paul began to address the Jews in the synagogue, where he was surrounded by all the converts already won to the Christian faith. But when the synagogue became the arena of unfriendly discussion, which evinced a

¹ See this route described in detail in Prof. Ramsay's *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, p. 30, 1890.

determination on the part of the Jews to resist the power of the truth, the apostle resolved to appeal to a wider audience, which he invited to meet him in a public lecture hall, the school of the rhetorician Tyrannus.

Advantages of Site. The natural situation of the city of Ephesus made it at once a great commercial centre, where East and West met together, and a principal seat of literary and scientific culture, where Greek philosophy and oriental mysticism, under all their varying phases, found eager and enthusiastic representatives. Every encouragement was given to eloquent defenders and expounders of the most curious views, by a population whose natural temperament made them welcome, like the Athenians, the announcement of any new thing; while the geographical position of their city greatly favoured the gratification of such eclectic tastes. The variety of schools represented, as well as the reputation of individual philosophers and rhetoricians, attracted large numbers of young men from all parts of the world, and the versatility and general culture of the Ephesian schools made Ephesus a favourite resort of the cultured youth of Rome. When Paul stepped upon the platform of a lecture room where teachers of philosophy and rhetoric had been wont to address their audiences, he thereby proclaimed that he had some new thing to tell, and courted the attention of those who were seeking after intellectual and spiritual guidance. So long as he had confined himself to the obscurity of a Jewish synagogue, the opposition which he met with was only that of dogged and persistent refusal to accept his message; but now, from pagan devotees, whose whole tendency of thought was traversed by his teaching, the apostle is to encounter sharp and direct hostility. For two years, at least, Paul continued to discuss with men of rich philosophic and scientific culture, as also with others sunk in the most vulgar superstition, showing the higher wisdom and the profounder mysteries of the Christian faith.

Paul and the Sorcerers. The sacred historian here puts on record an interesting story of a collision between Paul and certain sorcerers, who sought to emulate his power in working miracles. Besides the more ordinary forms of disease, cases

of demoniacal possession had been successfully dealt with by the apostle, and those who had given themselves out as exorcists were thus challenged either to do the same publicly as Paul had done, or own themselves and their arts impostures. Degenerate Jews were found in all the principal cities of the empire, in the East and in the West, who had apostatised from the religion of their fathers, and had adopted a strange medley of pagan mythology and theurgical practices, which, fluid and indeterminate as it was, came to be known under the general name of Neo-Pythagoreanism. The lineal descendants of this school were the alchemists of the Middle Ages. In Ephesus such men would find a field peculiarly well fitted for the practice of their arts. And just in the first century of the Christian era, when men were wearied of unsuccessful searchings after God, and discouraged by the sad discrepancy everywhere between the ancient ideals of virtue and the gross impurity prevailing around, when the old faiths were crumbling and many were becoming doubtful whether there was any such thing as truth at all, the most fantastic superstitions and the most curious arts of astrology, sorcery, and magic came to be possessed of a wondrous fascination over thoughtful and speculative minds. Most of the thinkers of that age, as we look back upon them, seem to us, like their mediæval representatives, half charlatan, half sage. To this order belonged Appollonius of Tyana,¹ in the south of Tyana. of Cappadocia, who had his home in Ephesus during the later part of the first century. He had been educated in Cilicia, and had learned not only philosophy in the schools, but theurgical arts from the priests in the temple of Æsculapius. Attached to the fashionable Neo-Pythagorean sect, and with much to tell of the wonders he had seen and done in distant India, he received in Greece and Asia a flattering welcome as

¹ *Philostrati de vita Apolloniū Tyanci libri octo.*—*Ensebius contra Hieroclem qui Tyaneum Christo conferre conatus fuerit.* Venice, by Aldus, 1501.—Baur, *Appollonius von Tyana und Christus*, Tüb. 1832; and an effective answer by Ed. Müller, *War Ap. v. Tyana ein Weiser oder ein Betrüger oder ein Schwärmer und Fanatik?* 1861. The question of the credibility of Philostratus is discussed by Iwan Müller in his *Comm. qua de Philostrat. in comp. mem. Ap. T. fide queritur*, 1858. Blount, the English deist, and Voltaire sought to exalt Appollonius above Christ. See Newman, *Historical Essays*, vol. i. No. 2.

a sage and miracle-worker, and a reformer of religion and morals, in all of which he seemed to manifest the great power of God. The life of Appollonius, written by Philostratus in the beginning of the third century, is a romance constructed for a purpose, and written by order of an empress, who hoped by means of it to aid in the revival of ancient paganism, and to glorify the exploits of the wonder-working sages of heathenism. A century later, in A.D. 305, Hierocles, governor of Bithynia, in railing treatises against the Christians, deliberately compared the miracles and life of Appollonius with those of Christ, and modern unbelievers of a school now antiquated boldly endeavoured to maintain the parallel. The real Appollonius was but one of many adventurers of that age, with more genius, and probably with nobler impulses, than most of those around him. For one of such a sort, we may easily suppose there were multitudes of self-seeking, greedy impostors, who consciously played upon the superstition and general credulity of the people. These swindling mountebanks trafficked in magical formulæ, to the repetition or simple possession of which was attributed the most wonderful efficacy in securing good fortune and warding off disaster and disease. Such letters, words, or combinations of words, written out on scraps of parchment, were sold to the poor

Magic dupes who placed faith in them, at prices varying
 Formulæ. according to the reputation of their author and retailer. The most famous of all these charms was a formula consisting of words written on the girdle, feet, and forehead of the goddess. These words are the *Ἐφέσια γράμματα*, *Ephesiæ literæ*, which were carried about in little leathern bags as protection against all injuries from gods and men. Clement of Alexandria, by subjecting them to considerable distortion, sought to give to each of them a meaning, on the understanding that they were formed originally out of Greek words; but it has now been proved that they have much closer resemblance to Semitic roots, and that they most probably owe their origin to the early oriental tincture in the composite religion of the Ephesians.¹ In the

¹ Many of these magical formulæ were supposed to have been employed by Solomon, and to have been recorded by him. The traditions of Solomon's

pursuit of this base and unholy traffic, each of the motley crew of jugglers, necromancers, soothsayers, and exorcists would use his own device in muttering some long, unintelligible rigmarole, or in uttering, amid awe-inspiring spells, some single magic word or potent name. That the godless and unprincipled sons of Sceva used the names of Jesus and Paul in their incantations, was itself a striking tribute to the success of the apostle, and the reputation which he had already won in the city. The success which attended the efforts of these sorcerers was of the sort that came to the magicians of Egypt. Over the evil spirits which came forth at their word they had no further control, and what seemed at first a victory was soon turned into an ignominious defeat. The names of Jesus and Paul were acknowledged, but the pretensions of the magicians were utterly discredited. The case reported is in all probability only one of several of a similar kind which occurred about this time in Ephesus, so as to make a powerful impression upon the hitherto bewitched populace. Many of those who had themselves indulged in the fascinating study of the secrets of nature and of the future, convinced of the folly of their conduct and of the power of Jesus' name, brought forth the books containing what had been regarded as the most potent spells, and long considered by the superstitious as of priceless value, and showed in the most unmistakeable manner, as they committed them to the flames, that they had indeed forsaken all for Christ.

Fighting with Beasts. During the long period of the apostle's residence in Ephesus, we may be sure he passed through the most varied experiences. After his early struggles with the Jews, which resulted in his quitting the synagogue, we do not hear of any particular hostile demonstration on the part of the Jews or of the heathen, until the grand outburst of popular fury by which Paul was finally driven out of the city. There are just two sentences in Paul's own writings which make it plain that during that time his hardships and

magical performances are detailed by Josephus, *Antiquities*, viii. 2. 5. With the literature referred to in Acts xix. 19 may be compared the magical formulæ deciphered by Dr. Wessely in the *Expositor*, 3rd Series, vol. iv. pp. 194-204, 1886.

dangers were of no ordinary kind. In one passage, written shortly before he quitted Ephesus (1 Cor. xv. 32), he says, "I have fought with beasts at Ephesus:" and in writing again to the same church from Macedonia immediately after his departure from Asia (2 Cor. i. 8), he speaks of trouble that had come upon him in Asia, which had proved so heavy and serious that his very life had been despaired of. This latter passage might indeed refer to treatment at the hands of men similar to that which he had received at Lystra at the close of his first journey, when he was stoned and left for dead (Acts xiv. 19). But the question has been much discussed, whether the reference to the fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus must not be taken literally as an allusion to a terrible ordeal in the amphitheatre through which the apostle had passed, the story of which was still fresh in the memory of his readers.¹ The literal interpretation seems forced upon us. During some great popular tumult, the Roman magistrate, anxious to soothe the excited populace, might easily overlook, or fail to hear, the apostle's claim to Roman citizenship, and though escape from the arena, where even those left alive by the beasts were despatched by the sword of the executioner, was almost an unheard-of circumstance, the very fact of the solemn mention of it in the place where it is introduced, implies that something very extraordinary happened. Then again, in so solemn a passage, the apostle would never have used a phrase which, if taken in the sense naturally suggested by the words, would make him chargeable with rhetorical exaggeration. Fighting with wild beasts was an ordeal with which, in all its literal barbarity, the people of that age were only too familiar; and, had the apostle's use of the phrase been figurative, he would have

¹ The most thorough discussion of this question is given by Krenkel, *Beiträge zur Aufhellung der Gesch. v. der Br. d. Ap. Paulus*, pp. 126-152, 1890. His conclusion is in favour of the figurative interpretation as accepted by most commentators. The literal interpretation is insisted upon and recommended by most convincing arguments by Holsten, *Das Evangelium des Paulus*, I. i. p. 424, 1880, and by Weizsäcker, *Das apostolische Zeitalter der Christlichen Kirche*, p. 337, 1886. See also Godet, *Comm. on 1 Cor.*, vol. ii. p. 393, and Wordsworth in *Comm.* The latter points out that the literal view suits best in a passage dealing with the resurrection of the body.

taken care to make that evident. Having by some signal providence been delivered from a death that seemed inevitable, we may well suppose that the work to which he returned received a new impulse from the notoriety which such fearful trials and so wonderful a deliverance had brought him.

Churches
founded. During this period apparently the various churches of Asia were established, in some cases possibly by means of the itinerant labours of the apostle himself; in others, and these undoubtedly the more numerous, by means of those who, from various parts of Asia, visited the chief city of the province, and returned to their own home to tell how great things the Lord had done unto them. The seven churches of the Revelation, and also those of Colosse and Hierapolis, most probably owe their origin to this period of the apostle's ministry. Undoubtedly the apostle's attention was mainly given to the proclamation of the gospel within the limits of Ephesus itself.

Worship
of Diana. The interests of all classes of the Ephesian community, in some way or other, clustered round the temple of Diana and the worship of the great goddess. Philosophy, even when directed against the grosser superstitions of pagan mythology, had not penetrated the minds of the masses. Jewish monotheism, though securing occasional proselytes, had not perceptibly affected the prestige of Diana, or diminished to any appreciable extent the number of her votaries. But now it seemed as if, indeed, the honour of the goddess was in danger. So soon, then, as the success of the apostle became evident, and it was seen that his aim was nothing less than the utter overthrow of Diana, the powerful sacerdotal caste was roused; and though, probably fearing lest a combat with so powerful a dialectician as the lecturer in the hall of Tyraunus might result in discrediting them before the people, they abstained from publicly expressing their hostility, they wrought no doubt upon the cupidity of the craftsmen, and raised through them the cry which resulted in such a tumult as they had been most anxious to excite. Thousands of designers and artificers were directly interested in maintaining the high reputation of Diana of the Ephesians.

The temple of the goddess, for size and beauty, was regarded as one of the wonders of the world. Tradition reports that in succession seven temples of Diana had occupied that one site. Of these, five belong to prehistoric times, and may or may not have had a material existence. Two are well known to us from full and detailed descriptions preserved in the pages of classical writers. The edifice which occupied the site in the days of the apostle had taken the place of an earlier structure burnt down on the night on which Alexander the Great was born (B.C. 356), by a hare-brained Ephesian, carried away by the mad resolve to secure notoriety to himself at any cost. The loss of such a priceless treasure roused in no ordinary degree the enthusiasm of the citizens of Ephesus. The resolve at once was made to build immediately another temple, vaster in dimensions, and richer in material, than that which now lay in ruins. So determined were they that the work should be their own, that the offer made by Alexander to complete the work at his own expense, as his gift to the far-famed Diana, was refused. The women freely contributed their precious ornaments, costly marble pillars were presented as free-will offerings by princes of Asia and wealthy citizens, whose names may to this day be read on the bases of the broken columns, and the whole work was entrusted to the most distinguished architect of the time.¹ The magnificent building thus raised was gradually stored with many precious gifts, and by and by became a perfect treasure-house of costly jewels and noble works of art. An image of the goddess in gold and ivory, wrought with consummate skill, adorned the innermost sanctuary. But in that same sacred place there lay another image of the goddess, which, in the eyes of the worshippers of Diana, was of infinitely greater value than the beautiful temple and all its riches. To outward appearance this figure was an unshapely block of wood, rudely representing a female figure with many swollen breasts, but with scarcely any other recognisable human feature. Preserved in its original freshness by regular

¹ Wood, *Discoveries at Ephesus*, Lond. 1877; Falkner, *Ephesus and the Temple of Diana*, Lond. 1882; Zimmermann, *Ephesos im ersten Christlichen Jahrhundert*, 1874; Lightfoot in *Contemporary Review* for May 1878, reprinted in *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, Lond. 1889, and especially pp. 297-302.

anointing with the sacred oil, it was said to have been saved by the priests from the wreck of the seven successive temples, and to be itself that very image which fell down from Jupiter. This famous temple with its sacred deposit was visited by devotees from all parts, who carried with them on their return home mementoes of their pilgrimage, in the shape of miniature models in silver of the far-famed sanctuary. Tradespeople, too, trafficking in other articles of commerce, profited greatly by the concourse of people on festival occasions. Demetrius the silversmith, at the instigation probably of the priests, raised the cry, "Our craft is in danger, and dishonour is threatened to our goddess." The readiness with which the cry was responded to, is a tribute to the success of Paul's labours. And that the apostle's presence had told not only on the humbler classes, the slave element in the population, as we so often hear it confidently asserted, appears from the fact that some in the highest official ranks showed themselves anxious to preserve the bold preacher from bodily harm (Acts xix. 31).

It is interesting to notice that Paul had won the Asiarchs. favourable consideration of "certain of the chief of Asia." These Asiarchs were the chief priests of the province, who held office, it would seem, for a term of four years, and were thereafter allowed to retain the name, and were ordinarily ranked in a distinct class of honour by themselves. The chief function of the Asiarch consisted in the presidency of the quinquennial festival, the cost of which he was required mainly to bear. His priesthood had reference only to the worship of the emperor with which those games were associated. He was properly master of ceremonies, and thus had not necessarily anything in common with the sacerdotal caste, whose interest was bound up with the maintenance of the temple and the splendid worship of Diana.¹ The interests of the temple and worship of Diana were guarded by a special board consisting of twelve members, two being chosen from each of the six tribes of citizens, elected to hold this office for the space of one year. These keepers of

¹ Lightfoot, *Ignatius and Polycarp*, 2nd ed., vol. iii. pp. 407-415, Lond. 1889.

the temple had charge of the fabric and of all the treasures that had been gathered together there. It has been conjectured by Canon Hicks, the greatest living authority on Ephesian inscriptions, that Demetrius the silversmith was president of this board. One Demetrius is named in an inscription as first representative on this temple board of the chief or Ephesine tribe.¹ If this be our Demetrius, as is highly probable, he would be entitled, and even called upon, from his official position, to sound the alarm when it appeared that the worship of the goddess was threatened with loss or overthrow; while, as the leading silversmith, who gave employment to many tradesmen in preparing the miniature copies in silver of the sanctuary of Diana and the statue of the goddess within, which pilgrims carried away with them, he could rouse his own workmen and others belonging to allied guilds by the cry, "Our craft is in danger." The temple board would espouse the cause of the priests, and both combined would easily carry the mob with them; but the Asiarch and those belonging to his order would maintain an attitude of cool indifference. Canon Hicks has clearly shown that during the period with which we deal, the growing popularity of the Caesar worship, which was directly hostile to the Diana worship, was distinctly favourable to the apostle in Ephesus,

¹ Canon Hicks has written an extremely interesting and instructive paper on "Demetrius the Silversmith: an Ephesian Study," in the *Expositor*, 4th Series, vol. i. pp. 401-422, 1890. There is one conjecture which I venture to say will not generally commend itself. Luke describes Demetrius as one "who made silver shrines for Diana." Hicks supposes that Luke, who was not present with Paul at the time, and was therefore obliged to use the statements of some other person, had misapprehended his document, which characterised Demetrius as *νιοποιὸς τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος*, member of the board charged with keeping the temple of Diana, and rendered the term by the paraphrase *ποιῶν ναοὺς ἀργυροῦς Ἀρτέμιδος*, maker of silver shrines for Diana. The very able and instructive article of Professor Ramsay in the *Expositor* for July 1890, pp. 1-22, entitled "St. Paul at Ephesus," gives several convincing arguments in favour of the accuracy of the account given in Acts, and suggests that the silver shrines may have been like the terra-cotta shrines of which specimens from Asia Minor are extant, but that they have disappeared simply because of their value. In his reply in "Ephesus: a Postscript," in *Expositor* for August 1890, pp. 144-149, Canon Hicks explains that he accepts the historical accuracy of the account by Luke, and simply means to emphasise the zealous opposition shown by the temple votaries, in combination with the craftsmen whose self-interest had roused them to make the first onslaught.

and would secure for him the interference of the civil authorities, to prevent any open violence being committed against him on account of neglect or repudiation of the Ephesian goddess. Ephesus, which had before on coins and inscriptions called herself "worshipper," keeper or temple-sweeper of Diana (*Νεωκόρος τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος*), was now officially styled on coins and inscriptions, "the temple keeper of the Augusti." The whole official class of Ephesian civil and municipal dignitaries befriended Paul, and would not be prevented by religious prejudice from admiring the courage and ability with which the Jewish stranger had maintained his cause against all comers. It would seem, too, as if so important a functionary as the town-clerk or recorder had been impressed by the apostle's powers, and by the favourable reception given to his preaching in the city, to such an extent that he felt the necessity of proceeding in the matter with due deliberation. Paul, the Roman citizen, was quite entitled to discuss the question of Diana's claims. But this had already been fully done. The apostle's personal labours in Ephesus were at an end.

The result of those three years' work must have been great both in extent and in depth. Paul never forgot his apostolic mission, and steadily refused to linger in one place to the deprivation of other places, unless the nature of the work was so peculiarly encouraging as to indicate very distinctly that it was God's will that he should stay. In Ephesus, undoubtedly, his main concern was in conversions from Judaism and paganism to Christianity. He was essentially a pioneer, used by God as the instrument for adding to the Church such as should be saved. Paul was, in ordinary circumstances, an evangelist, constantly moving about, and leaving to others, like Aquila and Priscilla, the task of building up the converts and instructing them in the faith of Christ. But when opportunity was granted, through a long-continued, constant residence, of using his great gifts in doctrinal and experimental teaching, we should certainly expect a community so favoured to attain a quite unusual eminence in the knowledge of God and Christian truth. And so, indeed, we find that Paul left behind him in Ephesus

a church, not only numerically large, but also well instructed in the faith. Those of Asia, more frequently it would seem than the members of any other church, are found accompanying him, or rallying around him, on his visits to the most distant places, and in many of his epistles he speaks of them. Epænetus, the first-fruits of Asia, does credit to his instructor by faithful work in Rome; and Onesiphorus, Tychicus, and Trophimus all prove true yoke-fellows in the ministry of the gospel. Perhaps not less significant of the size and importance of the Ephesian Church, is the fact that on his last journey to Jerusalem the apostle felt compelled to avoid entering the city, knowing that he could not appear there without laying his account to spending time. The organisations were so numerous, the number of Christians engaged in active work so great, the questions agitated so serious, that he clearly foresaw that, should he only begin to look into their affairs, he must abandon that visit to the Holy City on which he had set his heart. The extent to which Christianity had spread in Asia is further witnessed to by the appearance, even during the apostle's lifetime, of some who were attached loosely to the cause, as they showed by their coldness toward him during his imprisonment at Rome (2 Tim. i. 15). Already there were, it would seem, in this church some who had been swept into it, and who were kept in it, by the very evidence of success that had attended its establishment.

Farewell
to the
Ephesians. At Miletus, some thirty miles from Ephesus, the apostle had his last interview with the representatives of the Ephesian Church. There is not a vestige of historical evidence to show that the apostle ever again visited Asia, or any of the Eastern churches which he had founded. In support of the very widely adopted theory of a second Roman imprisonment, imaginative descriptions of a later visit paid to Ephesus and neighbouring Christian communities have been given, and Lewin in particular, in his *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, gives a detailed report of this apostolic expedition, ending with a very circumstantial account of Paul's arrest at Ephesus, and his second journey as a prisoner to Rome. But if by such conjectural manufacturing of history certain difficulties in the pastoral epistles receive

apparent solution, it creates, as conjectural history generally does, much more serious difficulties in other directions. The apostle spoke to the Ephesian delegates in accents of confident assurance, when he said with solemn emphasis, "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more" (Acts xx. 25). To suppose that Paul, without the infallible direction of the divine Spirit, would make such a statement as this, which he well knew would call forth bitter tears and lamentations from his friends,—to suppose that he would harass the minds of those already sufficiently burdened, by giving expression to a mere surmise of his own,—is, it seems to me, in direct contradiction to all that we know of the thoughtful considerateness and fine unselfish nature of the apostle. When, just immediately before his visit to Miletus, the apostle wrote to the Romans, he referred to his intention to make a journey as far as Spain, but his statements with reference to that project are very distinctly hypothetical. He knows only that he is going to Jerusalem. He has had a great desire to go to Rome, and if he be allowed to carry out his proposal to visit Spain, he will see Rome by the way. Meanwhile, he has been told of the bonds and imprisonment that await him, and knows that after Jerusalem he shall no longer have any liberty of movement, either in the East or in the West. He received intimation of the fact that he would never see the various Christian churches of his planting again, from the same unerring instructor as had informed him of the bonds which in due time were laid upon him. His address assumed a tone of solemnity becoming the occasion. He reminded them of his long and laborious service among them, and commended for their imitation that humility and earnestness and faithfulness to the truth of God which they had seen in him.

Warnings. The apostle warns the Ephesian presbyters of heretical teachers, who seem to have been only waiting for his departure, in order to begin their perverse and corrupting activity. Some of these would come to them from without, but others should rise up from among themselves. That no such heresy did find entrance among the Ephesians

during the apostolic age, is indeed amply proved from canonical Scripture. The presbyters of Ephesus had taken to heart the apostle's warning, and offered active and successful resistance to the entrance of all false teachers. Some eight years probably after Paul's visit, we hear of the Church of Ephesus again from the author of the Apocalypse. The Ephesians had meanwhile been engaged in a conflict. False apostles had arisen, but their titles had been challenged and found defective. What variety of false teachers

Teachers, may have sought entrance into Ephesus we do not know, but one peculiarly offensive and pestilent heresy is named as having called forth special opposition, and awakened an emphatic and vigorous protest. The Lord testifies that toward the Nicolaitanes, these Ephesian Christians had manifested the same hatred and loathing which He himself entertained. This libertine sect seems to have made attempts more or less successful upon the other churches of Asia, and the foul practices of its adherents are quite sufficiently indicated under the symbolical designations of Balaam and Jezebel. It is interesting to observe with what emphasis the Lord of the churches protests against that special form of heresy which inculcated, or at least apologised for, impurity and corruption in walk and conversation. Other forms of heresy had indeed already appeared in Asia, so that Paul found occasion to contend against the Judaistic-Gnosticism which had crept into Colosse, and to repeat to Timothy the warning he had uttered to the presbyters at Miletus, lest even in Ephesus such intellectual and doctrinal errors might yet find entrance.¹ In the period referred to in the Apocalypse, the attitude of the Ephesians in regard to heresy was precisely similar to

¹ The apostasy of Phygellus and Hermogenes (2 Tim. i. 15) was from Paul, not from the faith; and Alexander, Hymeneus, and Philetus (1 Tim. i. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 17) had thrust away a good conscience, and, simply in consequence of moral depravity, fallen into doctrinal confusion and error. Of purely intellectual and doctrinal heresy in Ephesus itself there is as yet no word. The Nicolaitanes referred to in the Apocalypse are not to be identified with those of that name who figure as Antinomian Gnostics in the post-apostolic age, claiming descent from Nicolas the deacon (Acts vi. 5). Comp. Kurtz, *Church History*, § 27, 8. The name was used in later times in the most general way to designate all sorts of views and practices among churchmen of an immoral tendency. See Kurtz, § 96, 5.

that represented in the Pastoral Epistles. It was moral evil against which they had to contend, and to this they offered an uncompromising resistance. Nevertheless the Lord had something against them. Doctrinal purists though they were, the very chill of death was creeping over them.

We have now to pass over a period in the history of the Church of Ephesus of somewhere about forty years. The older members of the congregation are those who in their early youth received the Apocalyptic warning and rebuke; and almost all the members, young and old, owe their religious training to the direct ministry of the Apostle John. Of such

Ignatius at a community we would entertain high expectations.
Ephesus. A glimpse into the moral and spiritual condition of the Ephesian Church of this period, just such as we would desire, is afforded us by the epistles written to its members from Smyrna by Ignatius of Antioch, as he pursued his journey to receive at Rome the crown of martyrdom. By order of the Emperor Trajan, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, was put in bonds and carried away from the scene of his labours. Travelling under the direction of his soldier guards, who treated him with great harshness on the way, he reached the Phrygian city of Laodicea. At that point the great road leading westward breaks into two—one going in a more southerly direction through Tralles, Magnesia, and Ephesus; the other, by a more northerly route, through Hierapolis, Philadelphia, and Sardis to Smyrna. The northern road, being the shorter of the two, was the one chosen by the commander of the party. After some delay at Philadelphia, they reached Smyrna, and there halted for some time. From Laodicea it would seem that intimation had been sent along the southern road to the Christians at Tralles, Magnesia, and Ephesus of the movements of the Antiochean bishop, and without delay they arranged to send representatives to confer with the martyr during his detention at Smyrna. From Tralles, the most distant of the churches, one delegate was sent, from Magnesia there were four; and from Ephesus, which was but forty miles off, there were five. In each case the bishop formed one of the deputation. The spiritual

conversation and loving ministry of the Ephesian brethren did much to cheer and sustain the sufferer's heart. During his stay with Polycarp of Smyrna, Ignatius wrote letters to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, and Romans. The Epistle to the Ephesians is by far the longest and most elaborate of all the seven epistles written by the martyr during his journey to the West. He gives hearty expression to his gratitude to the Ephesians for the thoughtful attention they had shown him, commends their faithfulness, and exhorts them to constancy and continued watchfulness. It is for us at this particular point peculiarly interesting, because of the glimpse which it affords into the condition of the Ephesian Church, at a period probably not more than one generation removed from that referred to by the Apostle Paul in his epistle, and by John in his Apocalypse. He refers, in warm and enthusiastic terms, to the brilliant record of this church in earlier days, its intimate relations with the blessed Paul, under whom, with them, he desires to sit, whose example he wishes to imitate while he walks in his martyr steps. The present condition of the church is such as also wakens in his heart the purest joy, and calls forth the warmest congratulations. He tells of Onesimus, whose visit had been an unspeakable blessing to him, that he had reported well of them, as not only steadfast in maintaining true doctrine, but also as spiritually-minded and warm in their love to God and to the brethren. They had not been without trials. Heretical teachers from without sought to spread among them pestilent heresies regarding the person of Christ, similar, probably, to those which the apostle had argued against when writing to the Colossians. Of his own accord, Onesimus, their bishop, had highly praised their orderly conduct in God, declaring that they all lived according to truth, and that no heresy had a home among them; that, indeed, they would not so much as listen to any one if he were to speak of aught else save concerning Jesus Christ in truth. "Even those things which ye do after the flesh are spiritual, for ye do all things in Jesus Christ." "So, then, ye are all companions in the way, carrying your God and your shrine, your Christ and your holy things, being arrayed from head to foot in the command-

ments of Jesus Christ.”¹ And not only in regard to its spiritual character, but also in regard to its external and material prosperity, the condition of the church was such as to call forth the hearty congratulations of Ignatius. He describes it as a flourishing church; its members as a multitude (*πολυπλήθεια*). It has a complete organisation, and enjoys the ministrations of devoted and able office-bearers. Onesimus, Bishop of Ephesus, a young man apparently when he met Ignatius, and therefore not to be identified, as tradition sought to do, with the Onesimus of the Pauline Epistles, who must have been at least forty years his senior, won the warm affection of the martyr to whom he ministered. The presbytery or session of elders under their bishop is declared to be worthy of God and to be working harmoniously together, “attuned to the bishop as its strings to a lyre.” The ideal of a prosperous church is realised in that of Ephesus: the members submitting themselves to the bishop and eldership, and by their concord and harmony praising Christ. The deacon Burrhus, too, was so helpful, that, by the church’s leave, he was retained for a time by Ignatius as his companion. During the fifty or sixty years of its existence, the Church of Ephesus had grown and prospered, so that before the end of the first decade of the second century, it was recognised as the principal Christian church in Asia, and as occupying a conspicuous place in the very front rank among the churches of Christ.

No reference to St. John. In his Epistle to the Ephesians, Ignatius nowhere makes any allusion either to the person or to the writings and labours of the Apostle John. Naturally enough, it has been regarded as remarkable that, writing as he did probably not more than ten years after the death of John, Ignatius should make no reference to John’s residence in Ephesus, while the more remote ministry of Paul is the subject of frequent reminiscences, in which the writer enthusiastically congratulates those among whom he laboured. This circumstance has been laid hold upon by Keim and others as an argument in favour of their theory that John never was in Asia Minor.² The answer to this objection that most

¹ See Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians, §§ 6, 8, 9.

² Keim, *Jesus of Nazara*, i. 218.

readily suggests itself is the one adopted by Lightfoot,¹ that, in the circumstances in which he then was, Ignatius naturally limited his references to martyrs who had trod a path similar to that along which he was now himself called to go. His own immediate surroundings, as well as the hopes and fears which now filled his heart, were such as would remind him of Paul and not of John. We have, indeed, no reason to suppose that, during his residence at Ephesus, John in any remarkable measure impressed his mark upon the Christian community resident there. The church, already well grounded in the truth under the more than ordinarily protracted personal labours of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, may well be supposed to have continued distinctively Pauline, under the ministry of officers who faithfully represented the teaching of their master. There are, indeed, some who maintain a very different theory. Among those who cannot agree with John opposed to Paul. Keim and Scholten, in their refusal to believe that John ever had his residence in Ephesus, there are some who argue that the presenee of John in Asia Minor was directly hostile to the interests and to the party of Paul. This theory has been presented in the most complete and detailed manner, and with considerable ingenuity and force, by Hanson.² He pictures the condition of the churches of Asia, immediately after Paul's departure, as one of continuous confusion and strife. The assumed Judaistic tendencies of John would not allow him, by silence, to give even apparent sanction to the doctrines and practices of the Pauline teachers; and besides, it is regarded as more than probable that he had been formally deputed by those of Jerusalem to restore unity and enforce discipline, under the authority of the apostles, in a community where Paul had been boldly claiming independence of all human jurisdiction. In support of this circumstantial account of the state of matters in Ephesus, during the period of Paul's Roman imprisonment, the epistles to the churches in the Apocalypse are called as witnesses. It is assumed that the false apostles, who say they are

¹ Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, i. 404; ii. 64.

² Hanson, *The Apostle Paul and the Preaching of Christianity in the Primitive Church*, pp. 461-471, Lond. 1875.

apostles, and are not, can be no other than Paul and his fellow-labourers. That there was in Ephesus a party keenly antagonistic to the apostle is distinctly stated by Paul himself. Writing to the Corinthians, in A.D. 58, he declares his intention to abide still in Ephesus; because a great door and effectual had been opened to him, and there were many adversaries (1 Cor. xvi. 9). And again, when bidding farewell to the elders of the Ephesian Church at Miletus, he gives confident expression to his belief that after his departure grievous wolves would enter among them, not sparing the flock; and that even from among themselves would men arise, speaking perverse things and drawing away disciples after them (Acts xx. 29, 30). This, however, was an experience with which Paul was unfortunately only too familiar in other churches and other localities than those of Asia. That these adversaries should be regarded as the adherents of the opposing faction of John and the other original apostles, is a pure creation of fancy, for which history does not afford the slightest vestige of a foundation. We have no reason to doubt the correctness of the generally prevailing tradition, that during the years that followed the apostle's death, the Church of Ephesus was presided over by Timothy, who would faithfully represent and conscientiously promote the doctrinal and practical tendencies which had characterised the teaching of his honoured father in the gospel. In all probability he was at the head of the Christian community in Ephesus when the Apocalyptic Epistle was written (Rev. ii. 1-7), in which the doctrinal orthodoxy of the church which he governed is heartily recognised, and attention is especially directed to the firm resistance which its office-bearers and members had consistently offered to all who sought entrance into it as bearers of another gospel than that which they had been taught.

Second Century. We have every reason to suppose that the Church of Ephesus throughout the second century continued to present the appearance of a well-organised Christian community, in which true doctrine and a decorous life were strictly maintained under the control of distinguished and faithful ministers. The Church of Ephesus is named by

Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.* iii. 3, 1, as a trustworthy witness of the apostolic tradition; and he does this while referring to other great Christian churches in which this continuity of sound doctrine had been maintained by means of a brilliant succession of celebrated and devoted teachers. He regarded Ephesus as being worthy of being named alongside of Rome and Smyrna, with their noble roll of confessors and martyrs. It appears also that the Jewish element still bulked largely in the population, and Ephesus was the scene of that famous controversy between Justin Martyr and the Jew, of which we have a record in that father's *Dialogue with Trypho*. Though the treatise itself was not written until somewhere about A.D. 160, the actual conversation in all probability took place in A.D. 135, or shortly after, as implied by a reference to the war, apparently the Jewish one of Hadrian, as just concluded. But while the allusions to Ephesus and the Christian Church there during the first half of the second century are thus vague and occasional, we obtain a very distinct and interesting glimpse into the ecclesiastical life of the community toward the close of the century. Who the immediate successors of Onesimus, the Bishop of Ephesus on the occasion of the visit of Ignatius, may have been, and what their special character and standing, we have now no means of ascertaining. Throughout the whole of the century the only other Bishop of Ephesus known to us by name is

Polycrates, who may have held office during the last two or three decades of the century, and was an old man of at least sixty-five years in A.D. 195. In the year just named he comes prominently into view as a staunch champion of the Asiatic mode of celebrating Easter, and in his conduct of the dispute he reveals a character of remarkable strength and unflinching conscientiousness. The Bishop of Rome, Victor I., anxious to secure uniformity in the celebration of the great Christian festival throughout the whole Church, obtained from almost all the provinces synodical resolutions agreeing to the Roman custom; but the province of Asia, presided over by its bishop, persistently refused to yield. Obeying the summons of Victor, Polycrates had assembled the bishops of his province in order to discuss the

Easter question, and he answers that unanimously they had resolved to continue the quartodeciman observance as the practice favoured by the apostolic tradition. This rule they had received from the Apostles Philip and John, both of whom had long been resident in Asia. According to it, the 14th Nisan, as the anniversary of the institution of the Lord's Supper, had been regularly observed by St. John, and in succession by all those who had been reared under his influence. The main objection entertained against this practice, on the part of the other churches, was the recognition of Judaism which seemed to be given by the adoption of the day of the Jewish Passover as the day for celebrating the great Christian feast. It had also been unpleasantly associated with the Ebionite heresy, and the suspicion of Judaism not unnaturally attached to those who maintained what seemed an attitude of compliment and compromise toward distinctly Jewish institutions. Polycrates and his church, however, were quite above suspicion in regard to these doctrinal tendencies. The Church of Ephesus was still distinguished for its attachment to the true apostolic orthodox doctrine. The bishop, Polycrates, must himself have been born within about a quarter of a century of the death of the Apostle John. Of his own family already, before himself, seven had held the honourable office of bishop, and though some of these undoubtedly would be contemporary with our author, it is quite evident that the eighth episcopal member of the family, entering on office probably not later than A.D. 180, though possibly still earlier, must have been able to trace a lineal connection by no means remote with the apostolic age and

Letter to Victor of Rome. with prominent apostolic men. His letter to Victor, in the name of all the bishops, shows Polycrates, in respect of principle and courage, worthy of his

lineage, and well qualified to rank among the successors of the apostles. After enumerating all the great luminaries of the church in whose light the Christian communities of Asia had walked,—Philip the Apostle at Hierapolis, John at Ephesus, Polycarp at Smyrna, Sagaris at Laodicea, Thraseas at Eumenia, and Melito at Sardis,—as consistent observers of the practice which he and his fellow-bishops continued to

follow, Polycrates declares that he is in no way intimidated by the threats of Victor, because greater than he had said, "We ought to obey God rather than men."¹ It is an interesting picture which is presented us here of an Ephesian bishop, at the close of the second century, boldly affirming the Johannine doctrine and tradition in the face of threatened excommunication, and upheld by the unanimous support of the bishops of his province, who revere his character, and stand by the leader whose hair has whitened amid his labours on behalf of the kingdom of God in Ephesus and throughout the churches of Asia.

In the elaborate scheme of legislation by which gradations of ecclesiastical rank were carefully apportioned to the more prominent episcopal sees during the fourth century, a conspicuous position was assigned to the Bishop of Ephesus. The ecclesiastical dignitaries who presided over the churches in the three great cities of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, received the rank of patriarchs, and exercised authority respectively over Italy, Egypt, and the East. But the sixth canon of the Council of Nicaea, A.D. 325, which confirmed the jurisdiction of these patriarchs, enjoined that these should respect the rights of the other eparchies. The churches here referred to are those of the provinces of Asia, Pontus, and Thrace. The bishops or archbishops of these provinces are not simple metropolitans, but occupy a position scarcely inferior to that of the three great patriarchs. These three ecclesiastical provinces, known by the name of exarchates, had as their capitals, Ephesus, Caesarea in Cappadocia, and Heraclea, afterwards Constantinople. The very fact that Constantinople, originally one of the three eparchies, was elevated to rank next to Rome, shows how nearly equal to the great patriarchates these three eparchies were regarded. The Bishop of Ephesus therefore exercised metropolitan rights, which were practically those of a patriarch, over his suffragans throughout the ecclesiastical diocese of Asia, co-extensive with the civil diocese of Asia, and embracing ten provinces.

In the opening years of the fifth century the Bishop of Ephesus comes to the front in a decidedly unpleasant fashion. Antoninus, who had occupied

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* v. 27, 1-8, ed. Læmmer, 1862.

the see for some time, was charged by one of his own bishops before Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, with many crimes, mostly of a simoniacal character. A century before, the Bishop of Ephesus could not have been subjected to the supervision and judgment of the Bishop of Constantinople. But the capital of the Eastern empire had already asserted its superiority as the new Rome in the canon of the Second (Ecumenical Council of 381, and its bishop was exercising patriarchal authority, not only in the diocese of Thrace, but also in the dioceses of Asia and Pontus. When these claims were first formulated and legally recognised in the Fourth (Ecumenical Council of 451, it was ruled that appeals or references might be made to the Bishop of Constantinople rather than to the metropolitan of the eparchy.¹ In the exercise of those high prerogatives claimed for the bishop of the imperial city, Chrysostom went to Ephesus, and in the same year, 400, held a synod there, at which six bishops of Asia were deposed for simony, and a new bishop, Heraclides, consecrated in the see of Ephesus. This new bishop, who had been deacon to Chrysostom, was bitterly persecuted by the enemies of his patron, and when Chrysostom was finally banished in 404, Heraclides was deposed and cast into prison at Nicomedia, where he continued to languish for many years.²

Council of Ephesus, 431. An interesting event in the history of Ephesus was the assembling there of the Third (Ecumenical Council in 431. The whole church was now agitated by the Nestorian controversy, and churchmen everywhere were distinguished as sympathising with or opposing Nestorius and his opinions. The Bishop of Ephesus at this time was Memnon, a man of considerable reputation as an ecclesiastic and a theologian. He showed himself a determined opponent of Nestorius and a powerful ally of Cyril of Alexandria, gathering together in the synod no less than thirty bishops from his ecclesiastical province as supporters of the cause which he himself favoured.

¹ See especially canons of Council of Chalcedon, ix. xvii. xxviii., with explanations in Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*, iii. 393-340, Edin. 1883.

² Stephens, *Life of St. John Chrysostom*, 3rd ed., pp. 265-279, Lond. 1883.

At the Fourth Ecumenical Council of 451, attention was called to the ecclesiastical affairs of Ephesus by Bassianus, who had been bishop from 444 to 448, when he was violently dispossessed on the plea of various irregularities in connection with his consecration. The synod, after considerable vacillation, agreed that both Bassianus and his rival Stephen should be removed from the episcopate of Ephesus, retaining their episcopal rank and receiving pensions from the ecclesiastical revenues. The result was the appointment of Paul, who seems to have favoured Eutychianism, and to have suffered exile and deprivation, from which he was restored by Timotheus Aelurus, at a Eutychian Synod held in Ephesus in A.D. 476. The Bishop of Ephesus also at this time, as a mark of favour, had the *jus patriarchum*, hitherto exercised by Constantinople, restored to his see. In the year 478, however, after the fall of Basiliscus, the patron of Aelurus, Paul, under the judgment of a Synod of Constantinople, was expelled, and apparently the privileges enjoyed for so brief a period were annulled.

The last name of distinction associated with the John of Ephesus. Church of Ephesus is that of the monophysite bishop, John, who resided mostly at the Constantinopolitan court, where, from the middle of the sixth century, under Justinian and his successors, he exercised a powerful influence; but, long before that time, the church, as a Christian community, had ceased to have any importance, and the name of Ephesus was in repute only because of the ecclesiastical rank of its bishop and the place which he took in directing the affairs of the empire. In Asia, John is said to have secured the nominal conversion to Christianity of 70,000, and to have built ninety-six churches. He wrote in Syriac a Church History, from the time of the first Roman emperor down to A.D. 585, of which the third part, from A.D. 571 to 585, is still extant, and affords information regarding various historical occurrences otherwise unknown.¹

¹ *Joannis Scripta Historica*, etc. ed. Land, 1868; Cureton, *Ecclesiastical History of John of Ephesus* [in Syriac], 1853; Payne Smith, *The Third Part of the Eccles. Hist. of John, Bishop of Ephesus*, 1860; Land, *Johannes, Bischof von Ephesos*, 1856.

Decline and Fall. The conquest of Ephesus by the Turks, in the thirteenth century, was speedily followed by the building of the town of Ayasaluk, which for a time flourished, while Ephesus was gradually deserted. The new town occupied the site of the great Church of St. John the Divine (*ἅγιος Θεολόγος*), in which the Council of Ephesus had met in A.D. 431. The modern name of the present wretched little hamlet, with about a score of inhabitants, is simply a corruption of the name of the church, and perpetuates the memory of John's connection with the great capital of Asia.¹

2. AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

No serious doubt of the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Ephesians was entertained till the most recent times. "It is now half a century," says Holtzmann, "since its authenticity was first doubted, and the opinion that it is not the work of Paul has been gaining ground ever since."² This opinion rests largely on conclusions drawn from views of "the form, contents, and purpose" of the epistle, which must be subjected to a careful examination.

Early Witnesses. Meanwhile it will be necessary to consider the testimony afforded by ancient Christian writers. The witness of antiquity is strongly in favour of its authenticity, and no New Testament book is more satisfactorily supported by quotations in the works of the early fathers.

Clement of Rome, A.D. 95. It could scarcely be expected that Clement of Rome, writing to the Corinthians, would make any very special and pointed reference to the Epistle to the Ephesians. The two churches cannot be supposed to have had much in common. We do, however, find in Clement just that sort of use of the Ephesian epistle which in the circumstances we might have expected. Twice over he speaks of the enlightenment of "the eyes of our hearts," an evident reminiscence of our apostle's peculiar phrases (*St.*

¹ See description of Ephesus in Ramsay, *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, pp. 109-111, 1890.

² *Short Protestant Commentary on the New Testament*, iii. 1; Holtzmann on Ephesians.

Clement to the Corinthians, §§ 36, 59). "Let each man be subject unto his neighbour" (§ 38), is a clear reminiscence of Eph. v. 21; and "have we not one God and one Christ and one Spirit of grace that was shed upon us? And is there not one calling in Christ? Wherefore do we tear and rend asunder the members of Christ, and stir up factions against our own body, and reach such a pitch of folly as to forget that we are members one of another?" (§ 46), is clearly written in view of Eph. iv. 4, 25. Without directly quoting our epistle, or even naming it, the use of those phrases makes it highly probable that it was familiarly known to Clement.

Ignatius of Antioch, of Ephesus, probably in the early years of the A.D. 107. second century, little more than forty years after the date usually given for the composition of the Pauline epistle, is the first important witness to be examined on this question of authenticity. Of the seven Ignatian Epistles, now generally recognised as genuine, that to the Ephesians is by far the most elaborate, and in length is nearly twice the size of any of the others. The writer also repeatedly speaks of the extraordinarily high estimate which he had formed of this church, and expresses his intention, if it should be the divine will, to continue in a second treatise that discussion on the doctrine of the incarnation which he had begun (§ 21). The Church of the Ephesians he declares to be famous to all ages (§ 8), and he can wish nothing better for himself than partnership with the Christians of Ephesus, "who were ever of one mind with the apostles in the person of Jesus Christ" (§ 11). From such declarations as these he passes at once to sound the highest note of eulogy. Their supreme distinction lies in their intimate association with Paul, who had before gone on the same martyr route as that which he himself now trod. "Ye are the highroad of those that are on their way to die unto God. Ye are associates in the mysteries with Paul, who was sanctified, who obtained a good report, who is worthy of all felicitation; in whose footsteps I would fain be found treading, when I shall attain unto God; who in every letter maketh mention of you in Christ Jesus" (§ 12). Now it seems impossible to deny that the phrase "associates in

the mysteries with Paul" contains a direct allusion to the characteristic use of the word mystery in our epistle. The apostle tells us that he wrote in order to make his readers understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ (chap. iii. 3, 4). His knowledge was that of one initiated, and he desires to impart this to them. This is just how Ignatius describes the relation of Paul and the Ephesians. Here we have an important contribution to the proof at once of the Pauline authorship and the Ephesian destination of the epistle.—The figurative expression, which speaks of the Ephesians as the highroad of martyrs on their way to receive the crown, refers certainly to Paul, and probably to others, but only in a general way. It does not at all imply the thought that they had escorted Paul, as by their deputies they were escorting Ignatius, on the way to Rome. It is a turning of the language of figure into that of historical narrative to assume, as Lightfoot does (*Ignatius*, ii. 63), the meaning of the words to be: "Their spiritual position corresponds to their geographical position. As they conducted the martyrs on their way in the body, so they animated their souls with fresh strength and courage." If this were so, we would be obliged to say with Lightfoot, that such a reference to Paul could not be satisfied by the interview with the Ephesian elders (Acts xx. 17 sq.), but must refer to some later visit. It would seem, however, that here Ignatius, in his usual high-flown rhetorical style, means simply to acknowledge the kindly interest which the Ephesians had always shown in those who suffered for righteousness' sake. Ignatius evidently thinks only of going in the apostle's footsteps in the way of spiritual imitation, and not of literal reproduction of circumstantial details.—A considerable amount of controversy has arisen over the meaning of the words *ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ*. The translation given above is that of Lightfoot (*Ignatius*, ii. 65), who contends that they cannot mean "in all the epistle." We cannot accept his proof as convincing. Pearson, Jacobson, and Hefele, among editors of Ignatius, as also Alford and Westcott (*History of the Canon of the New Testament*, 1875, p. 47), favour the other translation.¹

¹ Hefele, *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera*, p. 163, *not.* 10, Tübingen 1855: Non in *omni*, sed in *una tota epistola*, Ignatius articulum *τῇ* ante *ἐπιστολῇ*

It is interesting to notice the rendering of the compiler of the larger recension, who by his paraphrase shows clearly enough what his understanding of the words of the genuine Ignatius was: "Who everywhere in his prayers remembers you." He evidently regarded the reference as being to one particular epistle, and that the Epistle to the Ephesians, which is well characterised by his words. This writer, whoever he may have been, seems in this instance to have shown real penetration in his reading of the words of Ignatius. What the original writer evidently wished to call attention to was not Paul's simple remembrance of the Ephesians, but the manner in which he evidenced that remembrance. Now he did this in that epistle certainly in his prayers: "Making mention of you in my prayers" (i. 16); "I bow my knees," etc. (iii. 14). Then again, the words of the genuine Ignatius expressly reproduce the most distinctively characteristic phrase of the Ephesian epistle in the words, "in Christ Jesus." Thus Ignatius, writing to the Ephesians and referring to their apostle, ingeniously reminds them of its keynote and most memorable expression.

Polycarp, etc. In the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, which is shorter than that of Ignatius to the Ephesians, we have two express and literal quotations from the canonical Epistle to the Ephesians (§§ 1, 2). In the Epistle of Barnabas: "Thou shalt be subject to the Lord and to the other masters as the image of God, with modesty and fear. . . . He came to all men not according to their outward appearance" (chap. xix.)—are evident reminiscences of Eph. vi. 5, 9.—In the Epistle to Diognetus (chap. ii.), the sentence about the purifying preparation of the new man is modelled upon Eph. iv. 21-24.

Summary of External Evidence. It is interesting to notice that each of the three first-mentioned apostolic fathers—Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp—wrote an epistle to a church previously written to by Paul. Where those writers

omisit. Crednerus (*Einführung*, i. p. 395) male contendit in πάση επιστολῇ non debere verti: in *tota epistola*, et autumat, locorum nostrum sanandum esse e recensione majori (interpolata), quæ habet ὁ; πάντοτε in ταῖς διήσεσιν αὐτοῦ μνημονεύει ἡμῶν (ὑμῶν).

quote or imitate any apostolic phrase, they do not name the author, nor use any quotation formula in the modern sense. Each of them, however, makes pointed reference to the previous Pauline epistle written to the particular church addressed. Clement, writing to the Corinthians, bids them take up the epistle of the blessed Paul the apostle, in which he charged them in the Spirit "concerning himself and Cephas and Apollos." Polycarp, writing to the Philippians, acknowledges his inability "to follow the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who, when he was absent, wrote a letter unto you," etc. (chap. iii.); and again (chap. xi.) speaks of them as those "among whom the blessed Paul laboured who were his letters in the beginning," where we have a composite reference to Pauline phrases used in Phil. iv. 15 and 2 Cor. iii. 2. And Ignatius, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, as we have seen, says: "Those who are borne by martyrdom to God pass through your city; ye are initiated into mysteries with St. Paul, who in every part of his letter makes mention of you in Christ Jesus" (chap. xii.).¹ Our epistle is also enumerated among the genuine epistles of Paul in the Muratorian Fragment, which dates probably about A.D. 180. It had also been given previously in Marcion's list as Paul's epistle, though under the name of the Epistle to the Laodiceans. About the same time its genuineness is witnessed to by Tertullian (*Adv. Marcionem*, iv. 5). Before the middle of the third century, Origen quotes from it with the formula: *as Paul says*.

So far, therefore, as external evidence is concerned, the Pauline authorship of our epistle may be regarded as well-established.

Critical Though the authenticity of our epistle was
Objections. witnessed to by an unbroken succession through eighteen centuries, objections were raised against it by critics of last generation. Those objectors based their suspicions on subjective and internal grounds of contents and style. The presence of un-Pauline words and phrases, the introduction of certain lines of thought, unrepresented in the undisputedly

¹ See Westcott, *History of the Canon of the New Testament*, p. 47, Lond. 1875.

genuine writings of the apostle, references to conditions and circumstances of church life supposed to be later than the times of Paul, indications of the work of an imitator modelling his production after the pattern of the Pauline Epistle to the Colossians,—these, and such-like reasons as these, were alleged as grounds for repudiating the Pauline and apostolic authorship of our epistle.

The evident connection which subsists between our epistle and that to the Colossians, has led many to entertain doubts regarding the authenticity of one or both.—In regard to the contents of the two epistles, several distinguished commentators have maintained that the similarity is so great that it would be an insult to the apostle to suppose that he could be the author of both, since it would imply a sad want of originality on his part, in respect alike of thought and of expression.¹ Such critics have argued that the type of doctrine and the general outline of thought is in both epistles the same. But they have altogether failed to show that the similarity is greater than might be expected, in two epistles written by the same author, about the same time, to churches not far removed from one another and surrounded to a large extent by similar conditions. It ought to be quite evident that the standpoint of the one epistle is essentially different from that of the other. The Epistle to the Colossians treats in detail of the doctrine of the person of Christ, while the corresponding portion of the Epistle to the Ephesians is occupied with a discussion of the doctrine of predestination, and an elaborate statement regarding the unity of the Jewish and Gentile elements in the one Christian Church. Even where the same expressions occur in both, they generally appear in different connections, in the development of distinctive and characteristic lines of thought. Farrar has summed up the outstanding differences in the two epistles, which may be

¹ "It is impossible," says Holtzmann, in *Short Protest. Comm.* iii. 6, "to suppose that Paul can have copied himself to such an extent, and often in the very smallest details of expression." Von Soden, on the other hand, in his able Commentary (in the *Haul-Commentar*, iii. 1, 1891, to which Holtzmann and Lipsius contribute) heartily admits the Pauline authorship of Colossians, and regards the connection between Ephesians and it to be nothing more than we might look for from one of Paul's most intelligent and appreciative disciples.

said to lie on the surface. The peculiar phrase "the heavenlies," used five times in Ephesians, does not occur in Colossians, and five important sections of Ephesians (i. 3-14, iv. 5-15, v. 7-14, v. 23-33, vi. 10-17) have nothing in Colossians corresponding to them. "The topic of Colossians is, Christ is all in all: the topic of Ephesians is, Christ ascended yet present in His Church."¹

De Wette, who entertained a very mean opinion of our epistle, regarded it as simply a weak amplification of the Epistle to the Colossians. It is referred to by this critic, and others of that school, as an example of the writing over of the earlier epistle by an imitator, who serves up the same contents in a looser and less concise form. But Harless, followed by Meyer, has shown that in several instances the ideas of Colossians are expressed in a terser and briefer style in Ephesians, and so the greater length of the later epistle is, on closer inspection, found to result not from verbose amplification of borrowed thoughts, but from the presentation of fresh and original matter. With reference to the comparative originality of the epistles as they stand, a singular result has been reached by Holtzmann. Apart from the theory regarding authorship, at which he ultimately arrives, the critic compares certain passages in Ephesians and in Colossians together, and comes to the conclusion that in an equal number of cases each of the epistles lays claim to the credit of originality. If, then, we maintain the integrity of the epistles, we cannot, upon Holtzmann's showing, charge the one with being an imitation of the other.

References to Gnosticism. When we consider the contents of these epistles, in their relation to the circumstances of the age

¹ Farrar, *Messages of the Books*, p. 327, Lond. 1884. The sort of similarity which exists between Ephesians and Colossians is one of which we have previous examples in the case of undisputed epistles of St. Paul. This has been well put by Farrar in a note on the page from which the above quotation has been taken. "The occurrence of two epistles on almost the same themes, yet widely different in detail, is found in the indisputably genuine Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. The relations between these two epistles are closely analogous to the phenomena presented by Colossians and Ephesians. Galatians and Colossians are specific, impassioned, polemical; Romans and Ephesians are calm and independent expositions of the truths involved in the letters which had immediately preceded them."

in which, on internal grounds, we must believe them to have been written, in order to determine what that age was, we shall find that there is no necessity for assuming different writers, or for doubting the Pauline authorship. It is admitted, on purely scientific grounds, by such unprejudiced scholars as Lipsius and Hilgenfeld, that even in the middle of the first century there were already Gnostic teachers, who had so far developed their systems as to form distinctive schools. These would originally have no connection with Christianity, and were wholly uninfluenced by Christian doctrines. Some of these systems were penetrated by Judaic elements, and others were developed on purely pagan lines. The eclectic tendencies of the times favoured the combination of these two, and some of the earliest known Gnostic systems exhibit a strange blending of Judaic, or at least oriental, mysticism with the more practical and prosaic mythology of the West. Whatever the religious basis of those systems might be, whether distinctively Judaic or distinctively pagan, the effort was made, by means of speculation upon the elements contributed by faith, to construct a rational system, a mysterio-philosophic doctrine current among the believing brotherhood. This was the Gnosis, built up avowedly on the basis of religious faith. As thus understood, there is certainly a Gnostic element even in the earlier epistles of Paul. Holtzmann¹ candidly recognises this, and shows how in First and Second Corinthians and in Galatians traces of this sort of Gnosticism are unmistakeably present. Paul describes his gospel as a Gnosis (2 Cor. ii. 14, x. 5, iv. 6), distinguishes, after the style of the Alexandrian speculation, the letter and the spirit of the law, and describes the one as overcome by the other; makes use of allegory, or spiritualising, in order to smooth over the more offensive aspects of his doctrine (1 Cor. x. 1-21; Gal. iv. 21-31), even speaks of a gift of Gnosis which is not objected to, if only it be not divorced from love (1 Cor. xii. 8, xii. 1, 8, xiv. 6), and, finally, speaks of the perfect or spiritual and the carnal (1 Cor. ii. 14, 15, iii. 1, 3), and represents the perfect as reaching a higher wisdom (1 Cor.

¹ Holtzmann, *Kritik der Epheser-und Kolosserbriefe*, pp. 293, 294, Leipzig, 1872.

ii. 6). This is certainly quite as much of a Gnostic element as we should expect to find anywhere in the apostolic writings. Modern criticism, however, professes to discern in those epistles usually assigned to the later period of the apostle's life, traces of a much more highly-developed Gnosticism, which demands the hypothesis of a considerably later date of composition. The Tübingen school, led by Baur, was committed to a theory of the history of the apostolic age, which could admit of such conciliatory tendencies as appear in the Epistle to the Ephesians only after a somewhat protracted period of sharp contention between the rival parties of Peter and Paul. Thus the critics of that school approached the study of our epistle with preconceptions and prejudices that necessarily affected their critical consideration of its contents. To support their already accepted theory, they sought for materials in the epistle itself that would favour the assigning to it of a date not too early to allow the historical development to have reached the point required. The attempt was therefore zealously made to discover references to heresies and forms of error that did not arise before the second century. Whether, as by Baur himself, Ephesians and Colossians were assigned to one writer, or, as by most of the later representatives of his school, to two different authors, or, as by Holtzmann, a portion of Colossians was regarded as Pauline, and the author of Ephesians and the interpolator of Colossians considered to be one, or, as by Pfleiderer, the author of Ephesians and the interpolator of Colossians be regarded as two different men,—in all these cases the epistles as we have them are assigned to the second century, and the allusions to heresy in both are supposed to refer to the errors of that age.

Now, any plausibility that there may be for such a theory attaches to Colossians rather than Ephesians. Compared with Colossians. The Colossian heresy has been carefully examined, according to the materials afforded by the epistle, by Neander, Pressensé, and Lightfoot, with in the main similar results.¹

¹ Neander, *Planting of Christian Church*, i. 319 sq., Edin. 1842; Pressensé, *Apostolic Age*, pp. 317-330, Lond. 1879; Lightfoot, *Commentary on Colossians*, "The Colossian Heresy," pp. 73-113, Lond. 1880.

The heresy had Judaic and Gnostic elements, and was evidently closely related to Essenism, from whatever source it may have been introduced into Colossæ. There is nothing at all in the epistle that requires us to suppose that the heresy had been developed to such an extent as to be an anachronism in the apostolic age. We find nothing that necessarily suggests the Cerinthian system of the closing decade of the first century, still less the elaborate and highly-wrought system of Valentinus, which reached its climax in the third decade of the second century. On the assumption of the Pauline authorship of Colossians, the representation given of the type of thought then prevailing need cause no difficulty. We have simply that Gnosticism which had, at even an earlier period, been developed outside of the Church, now forming alliance with Christian doctrine, and seeking to modify its development in accordance with its distinctive views and by its characteristic methods. And if this be so in regard to Colossians, then our task is easy with reference to Ephesians. Even Pfleiderer admits that in Ephesians there is no trace of the heresies combated in Colossians. As far as Ephesians is polemical at all, "its conflict is not with Ebionite Jewish Christians, not with a scrupulous asceticism, but with a frivolous libertinism, not with Jewish particularism, but with heathen anti-Jewish arrogance and want of brotherly love."¹ The object of the epistle is not to confute false teachers, but irenically to correct a wrong tendency, and to reconcile two parties, whose exclusiveness was threatening to divide the Church. All that critics can point to in our epistle as indicating the presence of Gnostic views among those to whom it is addressed, is the occasional occurrence of certain words and phrases that ultimately became technical terms in certain Gnostic systems. It need not really surprise us to find that, in a district like Asia Minor, kept in constant ferment by successive invasions of the most diverse philosophies and religions, even in Paul's time such phrases were being already appropriated by thinkers and teachers of special tendencies, and that the apostle regarded it as advisable to recapture the

¹ Pfleiderer, *Lectures on the Influence of the Apostle Paul on the Development of Christianity*, pp. 220, 221, Hibbert, Lond. 1885.

words and to attach to them definite Christian theological meanings. But even those words most evidently characteristic of later Gnostic systems, are not used in our epistle in such a way as to imply that they had, in the writer's day, obtained these definite significations. When, for example, the Christian is said to be engaged on tasks which lead him, like those initiated in the Greek mysteries, into further depths of knowledge and fuller degrees of enlightenment, the writer is simply borrowing from the same source as afterwards the Gnostic borrowed from. He turns to the Greek mysteries as affording an apt illustration of the truth which he wishes to enforce. Besides this, all the terms in our epistle which were ultimately appropriated by Gnostic teachers, had been previously used by Paul himself in his earlier epistles, and by the author of the Apocalypse, in many cases in a sense either the same as that in which they are used in Ephesians, or at least in a sense that readily suggested the use made of them in our epistle. The description of the Church as the bride of Christ, which is expressly called a mystery (v. 23-32), occurs previously in 2 Cor. xi. 2, frequently in Revelation and in the synoptic Gospels, and so cannot have been suggested by the Gnostic syzygies.

It also deserves to be noted, that so soon as the Pauline authorship is disputed, no agreement can be reached as to the date of its composition. Historical, meaning by that traditional, evidence is all in favour of the apostolic origin of the epistle. Criticism, proceeding on internal and subjective grounds, proves here as elsewhere specially weak in its constructive efforts. The entire adherents of the Tübingen school referred its composition to the second century, when Gnosticism had received its highest development. Holtzmann regards the position of the author of Ephesians and the interpolator of Colossians as that of a mediator between Paulinism and later Gnosticism. Von Soden, writing in 1887,¹ as the result of a most patient and detailed investigation, fails to see any trace of developed Gnosticism, and feels satisfied with fixing A.D. 70

¹ Von Soden, *Der Epheserbrief* in *Jahrbücher für Wissensch. Theologie*, xiii. 103-135, 432-498, 1887; also *Hand-Commentar*, ed. by Holtzmann, Lipsius, etc. iii. 1, pp. 78-150, 1891, by Von Soden.

as the earliest, and A.D. 90 as the latest, probable date for its origin. And, in his admirable contribution to the *Hand-Commentar*, iii. 1, 1891, he firmly maintains the position that the doctrinal contents are essentially Pauline, so that, purely on account of such peculiarities of style and construction as distinguish it from admittedly genuine epistles of Paul, and not on account of doctrinal differences, does he deny the Pauline authorship. He represents the author as an imitator of St. Paul, probably a younger contemporary, very familiar with the apostle's style and cast of thought. The want of apostolic epistles was sorely felt by those who had been so dependent on the personal guidance of Paul; and to supply this, his disciple, without the remotest intention of acting falsely, but earnestly seeking faithfully to represent the teaching of his revered master, writes carefully on the lines which he might suppose the apostle would have followed. He is not led to do this from any poverty of thought, for his work, even as thus circumscribed, shows him to be a man of singular freshness and originality of mind. Our critic, then, reaches the conclusion (*Hand-Commentar*, iii. 1, p. 96) that here we have the production of an unknown writer among the early Christians. But the very fact to which he calls attention, that, apart from the name of Paul himself, none of the known writers of the period have ever been suggested in connection with our epistle, should rather make us sceptical regarding so singular a phenomenon as that of a powerful writer, capable in ordinary degree of original work, not merely writing in Paul's name, but following out so closely the apostle's line of thought.

Language and Style. Opponents of the Pauline authorship of our epistle endeavour to show that, in respect of vocabulary and style, it is unlike any of the undoubted productions of the apostle. Klöpper,¹ for example, who has gone into this question very carefully, gives a list of eighteen words peculiar to the epistle and not occurring elsewhere in the Bible, sixteen not found elsewhere in the New Testament, and fifty-two which are not met with in the other epistles commonly assigned to Paul, excluding the Pastoral Epistles. It is

¹ Klöpper, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, Göttingen, pp. 9-12, 1891.

frankly admitted that the mere occurrence of *hapax legomena* cannot of itself prove the unauthenticity of a document, but the frequent use of phrases in a peculiar sense is regarded as presenting a formidable difficulty. The literary style of the epistle is generally pointed to by critics unfavourable to its authenticity, as entirely different from that of Paul. Klöpffer describes it as luxurious, and flowing, and overladen; whereas the style of Paul is terse, simple, and pointed. Argumentation of this kind is generally unsatisfactory, as it so readily admits of being influenced by purely arbitrary and subjective considerations. This at least may be said with confidence, that no proof of divergence of style and language between the writer of Ephesians and that of Philippians and Colossians, or even of Corinthians, can be produced, such as would for a moment shake the confidence of any one who did not think that he had otherwise strong grounds for rejecting the Pauline authorship.

That certain doctrines should be brought forward in new connections, and that certain truths should be dwelt upon and emphasised in our epistle which had not appeared at all, or at least were only casually referred to, in earlier epistles, is not to be wondered at. The apostle's own spiritual experience was progressive; and the later requirements of a well organised and established Church were different from those of infant communities. The doctrine of the Church, wrought out on the basis of a sound Christology, is just what might have been expected to form the crown of the apostle's labours as a teacher.¹

We hold, therefore, that nothing has been advanced to shake our confidence in the testimony of tradition, which has unanimously assigned our epistle to St. Paul. The peculiarity of contents and style may be naturally accounted for by the late period of its composition, and the special circumstances of the well-trained and highly-gifted community to which it was sent.

¹ "The idea of the Church," says Rothe, *Stil Hours*, p. 299, Lond. 1886, "develops itself only in the later writings of St. Paul, and is a natural consequence of the fact that the idea of the near approach of the second advent of Christ was falling into the background, and the idea of a necessary historical development of the kingdom of Christ was beginning to dawn upon his mind."

3. THE DESTINATION OF THE EPISTLE.

We have now to apply ourselves to the problem as to whether there be sufficient evidence to warrant the belief that the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians was written for and addressed to that Church of Ephesus, the history of which was sketched in our first chapter. In regard to no other epistle of Paul has such a controversy arisen, for though critics have disputed the genuineness of many epistles ordinarily ascribed to the apostle, yet in all cases, save the one before us, the text has prevented any uncertainty as to the readers addressed by the writer, whoever he might be. This, however, in regard to an epistle, is a matter calling for careful discussion and patient historical investigation.

Omission of words, *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ*. At a very early date it would seem attention was called to the absence of the words *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ* from certain important manuscripts. Of the earliest and best uncials that have come down to us, the *Sinaiticus* and the *Vaticanus* do not contain the words.

Marcion. According to the statement of Tertullian, it would appear that Marcion, writing probably about A.D. 160, referred to our epistle under the name of the Epistle to the Laodiceans, having substituted this title for that which the Church tradition had accepted as the true superscription (*Adv. Marcion.* v. 11, 17). The reference, however, is so slight, that we cannot confidently affirm whether Marcion actually had before him a text in which *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ* did not occur, or whether he arbitrarily ignored or excised the words, and, for some dogmatic reason no longer apparent to us, chose to assign the epistle to Laodicea. Nor can we regard as at all necessary the admission of Meyer, that the style of Tertullian's argument against Marcion requires us

Tertullian, to assume that the copies which he used, while A.D. 160-240, bearing the title *πρὸς Ἐφεσίους* had not in the address the words *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ*. Certainly as to the destination of the epistle Tertullian had no doubt, for he asserts that the autograph manuscript might even in his own time be found in Ephesus (*De Præscriptione Hæreticorum*, c. 36).

When we consider the end which Tertullian had before him in his work against Marcion, we need not be surprised at his confining himself in his reply to the general argument from the Church tradition, even though he had further material for such reply in the presence of the words referred to in the text. In this fifth book he seeks to prove that Paul's epistles, which Marcion professed to value highly, were thoroughly in touch with the Old Testament which the heretic repudiated. His allusions to matters of criticism therefore are purely incidental. His object is to support the doctrinal thesis. When he comes to Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, he remarks that this book of Scripture, while recognised by Marcion as genuine, has been tampered with so far as to have a different destination assigned it than that which had been accepted by Church tradition. He does not wait to say whether the text has been interfered with either by interpolations or by omissions. Instead of entering upon the controversy regarding the destination of the epistle, he expressly waived it, saying that the question about titles is of slight importance, seeing that what the apostle wrote to some he meant for all. Enough for his purpose that the epistle is allowed to be Paul's; he may therefore use its contents to confute his opponent. Whatever other modifications Marcion may have made upon the epistle to make it suit the destination he has assigned to it, are of no present interest to Tertullian. Apart, then, from Marcion's arbitrary departure from the Church tradition which made Ephesus the destination of the epistle, we have up to A.D. 208, the date of Tertullian's treatise against Marcion, no hint whatever that any peculiarity in the text, such as the absence from some copies of the words *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ*, gave ground for a suspicion that the traditional destination was regarded by any one as doubtful.

The hints afforded by the fathers of the third and fourth centuries do not seem to carry us much further on this point of textual criticism. During the Arian controversy, the orthodox party eagerly sought to appropriate every Scripture saying which might in any way contribute to the support of the doctrine of consubstantiality. In arguing with Eunomius of Cyzicus, a very pronounced

1. τοῖς αὐτοῖς
taken
absolutely.

Basil, adherent of the Arian party, Basil of Cæsarea, A.D. 329-379, writing about A.D. 360, makes reference to the opening words of our epistle. He maintains that Eunomius has no ground for refusing to the Son of God the predicate *ὢν*, since the apostle who describes only idols and their worshippers as *μὴ ὄντες*, does not hesitate to designate the Ephesians in writing to them *ὄντες* because of their union with the *ὢν*, saying *τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσι καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*.¹ Basil wishes to make of this verse a proof passage for use in the controversy. But now the awkwardness of the words *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ* following the *τοῖς οὖσι* is apparent; and so Basil endeavours to substantiate the reading that he has given, omitting the undesirable phrase. This he does on

Origen, two grounds. (1) First of all, he refers to earlier A.D. 185-253. writers who had given the same interpretation of *τοῖς οὖσι*. Origen, it would seem, in a commentary on our epistle, no longer extant in its unabridged form, had rendered *τοῖς οὖσι* absolutely. This is just the sort of interpretation we should have expected from Origen's strongly-marked tendencies as an exegete, and in view of this it is surely too much to say, with Westcott and Hort, that Origen could not

Jerome, have given such an interpretation of the passage A.D. 346-420. if he had before him the reading *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ*. When we take into consideration a passage in the Commentary of Jerome, written about A.D. 390, in which he refers to this interpretation, we shall see how possible it was for patristic exegetes to render *τοῖς οὖσι* absolutely, although accompanied by the words determining the local destination of the epistle. He says that some, indulging in unnecessary refinements (*curiosius*), had, on the basis of the divine name "I am" communicated to Moses, thought that those who are in Ephesus, saints and faithful, were addressed under a phrase indicating essence, being styled "those who are" as if from "Him who is." Others, he tells us, and with them he himself evidently agrees, regarded the epistle as addressed not simply to those who *are*, but to those who are at Ephesus. There is evidently nothing here to warrant the dogmatic statement of Westcott and Hort (*New Testament in Greek*, vol. ii. App. p. 123), that

¹ Basil, *Contra Eunomium*, ii. 19.

Jerome's remark about the interpretation to which he refers, *curiosius quam necesse est*, shows that Jerome was not himself acquainted with the reading ἐν 'Εφέσω. The over-refinement consisted in the treatment given to the words τοῖς οὖσι, and it is only the desire to free patristic exegesis from an evident absurdity (which, however, from the same class of commentators could easily be paralleled), that leads modern critics to assume that those giving to τοῖς οὖσι an absolute meaning could not have read ἐν 'Εφέσω in their text. There is really nothing to support the opinion that either Origen or

Jerome used texts in which the words ἐν 'Εφέσω
 2. Copies omitting did not occur, or even knew of their existence.
 ἐν 'Εφέσω.

(2) Basil, however, proceeds further to declare that he himself had seen ancient copies in which the words ἐν 'Εφέσω were wanting from the text. This is the first definite statement that we have met with in regard to the textual question. This, coupled with the fact that our oldest extant manuscripts A and B omit the words, is by many apparently regarded as almost conclusive evidence as to the original reading. Let us examine particularly Basil's own words. He says: "Thus have we found in the ancient copies οὕτω γὰρ . . . ἡμεῖς ἐν τοῖς παλαιοῖς τῶν ἀντιγράφων εὕρηκαμεν." It would be interesting to know what the antiquity of those copies may have been,¹ whether they were numerous, and whether they were regarded as authoritative by any other than himself. If very ancient and numerous, they would not probably have been left for Basil to discover; and even if we should not strictly press Basil's finding as an absolute discovery, these copies, had they been considered authoritative, would have influenced the Church tradition. The exigencies of controversy rendered Basil eager to secure the countenance of any sort of textual authority for a reading that precisely suited his purpose. He hailed the discovery, that in certain oldish copies the undesired words were wanting, and he would not care to inquire whether these

¹ That the epithet παλαιός was very loosely applied, may be seen from this, that Cyrill of Alexandria (†A.D. 444) speaks of παλαιὰ ἀντίγραφα of the works of Athanasius (†A.D. 373). See Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon*, s.v., New York, 1887.

texts might not have originated with the Marcionites, and have been left in obscurity just because of that origin. He may not have had the means at his disposal, and certainly he had no strong inducement to subject the discovered text to any very severe critical scrutiny.

Summary
of Early
Evidence. The result, then, of early documentary evidence may be stated thus. In the middle of the fourth century, the reading $\epsilon\nu$ $\epsilon\phi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega$ was generally current. In the second century, Marcion, notorious for the liberties which he took with the text of Scripture, differed, on what grounds we know not, from the Church tradition regarding the destination of our epistle. In the fourth century, only one solitary witness appears expressly declaring that he had seen texts, whether of any real value or not we have no means of ascertaining, in which the words $\epsilon\nu$ $\epsilon\phi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega$ were wanting. The earlier reference to the passage in Origen, as well as the later reference to it in Jerome, can be used only as witnessing to the existence of an absurd and vicious system of interpretation. All that can fairly be deduced even from the statement of Basil, is that he found examples of a reading in which he had a particularly strong dogmatic interest.

State of
Oldest Text. Weiss (*Introduction to the New Testament*, i. 339) says that "the $\epsilon\nu$ $\epsilon\phi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega$ was unquestionably wanting in the oldest text." Is it scientific to say dogmatically what was or was not "unquestionably" in the oldest text? Are we so precisely sure what really was the oldest text in the case of any disputed reading? When Tertullian wrote, probably at least one hundred and forty years had passed since the original composition of the epistle. How old might the manuscripts be that were used by him? Probably he had before him only a copy made by some scribe, a contemporary of his own. This again, or a copy of the same type, may have been the exemplar from which later copies were made, which Origen in the third century, and Basil in the fourth, commonly used, while they may have been able to look back to such a second century text as that of Tertullian with respect and awe as to an ancient copy. All that I wish to deduce from such a hypothesis, and all that is necessary for my purpose, is that modern critics have

no foundation in history and fact for saying dogmatically, as Weiss does, that because Tertullian seemingly did not read ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in the copy he possessed, and because Basil certainly knew of some of the more ancient copies extant in his day which also wanted the phrase, these words were " unquestionably wanting in the oldest text."

The omission of the words is supported only by ἐν Ἐφέσῳ wanting in the two great manuscripts of the fourth century, \aleph and B. \aleph and B. These were contemporary texts of Basil, and evidently represent what he regarded as the more ancient type. There is a tendency, mainly fostered by the enunciation of the principles of textual criticism given by Westcott and Hort, to accord an unquestioning acceptance to all readings supported by these two great authorities. We cannot here enter upon any discussion of these principles, but the reader may be referred to a convenient table drawn up by Godet in his *Commentary on First Corinthians*, vol. ii. pp. 483-491, Edin. 1887, in which it is shown that exegesis affords evidence of errors in these great documents, such as to suggest the need of some further proof of the primitiveness of any particular reading besides its presence in their texts. As a simple matter of textual criticism, it will not do to reject a reading found in all other uncials, and in all the cursives without exception, merely because it is not found in \aleph and B; nor can the patristic evidence previously referred to be pressed as unquestionably affording further and independent testimony. The other Alexandrines, A and C, and even the later uncials based upon the Syrian and Byzantine text, may represent in this particular instance a much older reading. This conjecture is greatly strengthened by the fact that the earliest patristic tradition favours the Ephesian destination of the epistle, so that in the second century Marcion stood alone in repudiating it. The probability is made yet greater, by the circumstance that all the ancient versions, the earliest of which dates from the second century,¹

¹ There is good reason to suppose that the Peshito, or Old Syriac, is identical with the ὁ Σύρος quoted by Melito in A.D. 170, which may therefore be set down as not later than the middle of the second century. See Scrivener, *Plain Introd. to the Criticism of the N. T.*, 3rd ed., pp. 312, 313, Cambridge, 1883.

and was decidedly earlier than Tertullian, have the reading, and so must have been made from a still more ancient Greek text containing the words in question. Any Syrian father, having the confidence of the Church to such a degree as to secure acceptance for his translation of the Holy Scriptures, would certainly use a Greek text of good repute. We therefore maintain that no case is made out against the reading ἐν Ἐφέσῳ on the grounds of the principles of textual criticism.

Interpolated or Omitted? The question that has here to be decided, rather than whether we might more easily explain the falling out from, or the insertion in, the text of such a reading. Certain modern critics¹ suppose that these words were struck out because of a difficulty early felt, in consequence of the absence of any greetings or personal references in a letter purporting to be addressed to a church with which the apostle had been so intimately associated. Against the supposition that the reading ἐν Ἐφέσῳ had been dropped from the original text, because it was felt even in the second century that the want of personal references in the epistle presented a difficulty, it is answered that the churchmen of that early age had not adopted the historico-critical method. But surely, without assuming on behalf of Marcion and Tertullian any tendency towards the anticipation of the critical methods of modern times, we may fairly suppose that not only they, but also their elder contemporaries, without consciously playing the rôle of critics, by the simple exercise of thoughtful reflection, might have their minds exercised in the presence of such a phenomenon, and might reach the conclusion that such an epistle, void of all personal allusions or greetings, was scarcely like what Paul would have written to a church where he was so well known as he was in that of Ephesus. Other critics,² however, regard the theory of the later insertion of these words as the more natural explanation of their appearance. The peculiarly abrupt and seemingly incomplete phrase,

See, however, Field, *Hexapla*, i. p. lxxvii., and Buhl, *Canon and Text of O. T.*, p. 187, 1891.

¹ Such as Hilgenfeld, *Einleitung*, p. 670 f., and Woldemar Schmidt in his edition of Meyer on Ephesians.

² Such as Holtzmann, *Einleitung*, 2nd ed., p. 284 ff.

τοῖς οὐδυν, would tempt transcribers, in the interest of clearness and intelligibility, to insert the name of some particular church with which the epistle had come to be especially associated. Then by combining Eph. vi. 21 with 2 Tim. iv. 12, they might come to the conclusion that ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ought to be inserted.¹ So soon, at least, as the Ephesian destination of the epistle had come to be generally accepted, and the title πρὸς Ἐφεσίους had found its way into all the copies, those who felt the desirability of interpreting τοῖς οὐδυν by a local designation would have no hesitation in supplying the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ.

Omission
more
probable. Here, then, we have before us the alternative answers to the question, whether the insertion or the dropping out of the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ is the more natural hypothesis. What seems to tell most seriously against the theory of the late insertion of the words is just this, that the implied insertion must have taken place at a very early date, before it could have dominated the most primitive tradition so completely as it did; and yet it is hard to conceive that an insertion of this kind should not have called forth such opposition, on the part of those acquainted with the original terms of the document, as would have prevented the formation of a catholic tradition on the lines of a text that had been thus tampered with. The other hypothesis, which seeks to account for the phenomenon in question by assuming that in certain early copies the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ were on theoretical grounds purposely omitted, has not the same difficulty to contend with. The maintainers of this view have not to account for the fact that ecclesiastical tradition continued unaffected by the change, so that it influenced only some of the Alexandrine texts, leaving absolutely untouched the Syrian and Græco-Latin texts. The hypothesis only requires the assumption, that such alteration was made by individual transcribers, whose actual handiwork, or immediate personal influence, secured for their text a limited circulation during a limited period.

¹ Von Soden, *Hand-Commentar*, III. i. 78, characterises this combination, suggested by Holtzmann, as *too reconclite* for the second century.

Results of
Patristic and
Textual
Evidence.

When, therefore, we have combined the early patristic evidence with that afforded by the earliest extant texts and versions, we find that, though possibly in Tertullian's time copies were in circulation in which the words *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ* were wanting, and such were regarded by Basil as having the authority of ancient copies, one of the most famous of the ancient versions, from a period earlier than that of Tertullian, used a text containing the words, and none of the early fathers ever thought to make even the absence of the words in question a ground for doubting the Ephesian destination of the epistle. With the exception of the heretic Marcion, none of them objects to the title *πρὸς Ἐφεσίου*, and there was absolutely no suspicion that the writing referred to was either an encyclical address or a catholic epistle.

Ignatius
ad Ephes.

We have already said all that it is necessary to say with regard to the use of this epistle in the early fathers, when discussing the question of the Pauline authorship of the epistle, and so here we need only refer to the evidence for the Ephesian destination of the letter, afforded by the epistle of Ignatius to that same church. It would naturally be expected that Ignatius, writing to Ephesus probably within forty years of the death of the Apostle Paul, should make special reference to any epistle which that apostle might have sent to that church, as well as to the well-known intimacy that had existed between its members and that apostle. Now, we actually do find that, though there are no direct quotations, there is unmistakeable and studied imitation of the phrases and style of our epistle throughout. If we compare the Ignatian Epistle to the Ephesians with the other Ignatian epistles, we shall find that this imitation of the canonical Epistle to the Ephesians is peculiar to the epistle addressed to that church. This copying of the style of Paul's epistle is most marked where we should expect it in the introductory formula. The prologue runs thus: "Ignatius, who is also Theophorus, unto her which hath been blessed (*εὐλογημένη*) in greatness (*ἐν μεγέθει*) through the plenitude (*πληρώματι*) of God the Father; which hath been foreordained (*προωρισμένη*) before the ages to be

for ever unto abiding and unchangeable glory (δόξα), united and elect (ἐκλεκλεγμένη) in a true passion by the will (θελήματι) of the Father and of Jesus Christ our God; even unto the church which is in Ephesus, worthy of all felicitation, abundant greeting in Christ Jesus and in blameless joy." Any careful reader will perceive that, besides the use in one sentence of so many words characteristic of our canonical epistle, as are here marked, there is throughout a designed imitation of phrase and style, evidently intended as a delicate compliment to the Ephesians, whose much-prized apostolic treasure was so familiar to him who now addressed them. It was not the practice of Ignatius to quote largely. His originality, as compared with Polycarp, is very marked. He can scarcely be said to quote, but he shows clearly his familiar acquaintance with the sacred writings. "This knowledge betrays itself in casual words and phrases, stray metaphors, epigrammatic adaptations, and isolated coincidences of thought. Where there is an obligation, the borrowed figure or expression has passed through the mind of the writer, has been assimilated, and has undergone some modification in the process."¹

Critical Difficulties. Having thus considered the question about the presence in the text of the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, from the standpoint of textual criticism, and also the evidence afforded of the Ephesian destination of the epistle from references to it in early Christian writings, we proceed now to inquire what are the difficulties experienced by critics in acquiescing in the traditional opinion that this epistle was addressed to the Church of Ephesus, and what alternatives have been suggested by those who feel the force of those objections?

Absence of personal Allusions. Attention has been called to the absence of all personal allusions, in the way of reminiscences and greetings, such as might have been expected from the apostle had he been writing to the members of a church with whom he was so intimately acquainted, as he must have been with those of Ephesus, among whom he had wrought during a residence of nearly three years. This

¹ Lightfoot, *Ignatius and Polycarp*, 2nd ed. i. 556, 1889.

phenomenon is adduced as an argument in favour of assigning the epistle to a church, or circle of churches, which had never been visited by the apostle. This peculiarity of the epistle, however, may be accounted for by the very circumstance of the apostle's long residence in Ephesus, and his intimate relations with an unusually large proportion of the members. There would be so many entitled to recognition, that the apostle might find it better to name none, rather than do injustice to those who, owing to the exigencies of time and space, might be passed over. That the omission of personal greetings, and the absence of frank communication of circumstantial details regarding his own private affairs, did not result from any want of warmth of feeling on the part of the apostle toward the friends to whom he wrote, is shown by this, that he had actually commissioned a man, so well known and so highly honoured as Tychicus, to tell them all about himself, and to bring back a careful and detailed report concerning them. Too little importance has been attached to this sending of Tychicus. It seems to me a much more striking proof of the peculiarly intimate and affectionate relations subsisting between the writer and his readers, than could have been afforded by the most particular and extended list of individual names. With the exception of the companion Epistle to the Colossians, there is no reference in any other epistle of Paul to any such arrangement. In Colossians it is the same Tychicus who is commissioned to give detailed information as to the apostle's circumstances, and there, in addition, we have greetings sent from Colossians, and others somehow associated with Colossæ then resident in Rome, and to the brethren of Laodicea who, like the Colossians, were not personally known to the writer.—Then, again, even if the apostle might, without offence or injustice, have enumerated certain members of the Ephesian Church and some of the very many Ephesians living in Rome, the length of his epistle, and the sustained dignity of thought and diction by which it is characterised, and the peculiar circumstances in which the writer was placed, which may have necessitated his taking advantage of an opportunity that called for the immediate dispatch of his letter,—all these

circumstances, or any one of them, might explain the apostle's procedure in closing his epistle so soon as he had reached the conclusion of his theme.

Many have insisted that the writer of the epistle expressly refers to his readers as strangers with whom he personally never had any direct communication. They allege in support of this view, those passages from the text of the epistle (i. 15, iii. 1-4, iv. 21), in which they hold that the writer describes himself as having merely *heard* of his readers' faith, and speaks of them as having only possibly heard of the special dispensation given him as Apostle of the Gentiles, and as only possibly having heard Christ and been taught by Him. "The writer and his readers," says Holtzmann, "are known to each other only by report. There is no trace whatever of any previous acquaintance of the writer with the readers of the epistle, but, on the contrary, he has only heard of them (i. 15, iv. 21) and they of him (iii. 2, 4)."¹ So Harless, Olshausen, and De Wette. The recent commentary of Beet also advocates this rendering in regard to Eph. i. 15; while Weiss, whose treatment of this epistle, in his generally admirable and well-considered *Introduction*, is singularly reckless and dogmatic, is inclined positively to claim only the other two passages. "It is true i. 15 does not state that Paul had *only* heard of the faith of his readers; but the way in which he gives it simply as his impression that they had heard of his Gentile apostleship (iii. 2 ff.), and had been instructed in the true doctrine of Christ (iv. 21), makes it impossible for the epistle to have been addressed to a church founded by himself."² By all these writers, those passages, as thus interpreted, are regarded as favouring the theory that the epistle was not written for the exclusive and particular use of the Christian community at Ephesus. The meaning of those passages will be discussed in the commentary, but it may be here affirmed that the soundest and most sober exegesis does not regard it as at all

¹ *Short Protestant Commentary on the New Testament*, iii. 1, Lond. 1884. So, too, Von Soden, writing in 1890, in his *Hand-Commentar*, III. i. 84, insists upon the same interpretation of those passages.

² Weiss, *Introduction to the New Testament*, i. 340, Lond. 1857.

necessary to assume that the writer and his readers had not been personally acquainted with one another. The natural interpretation of the first passage is, that the writer had recently received certain intelligence about his readers, without by any means implying that he had not had earlier relations with them of an intimate and personal character. In reference to the other two passages, no expositor, who had not a theory to support at all hazards, would ever think of understanding them in any other sense than that of a supposition intended not to imply a doubt, but in the strongest manner to suggest that they had indeed heard and known the matter spoken of.

General tone of Epistle. The main difficulty, however, has been felt to arise, not so much from the absence of personal greetings, or the presence of express statements declaring the writer and the readers to be strangers to one another, but rather from the general tone of the epistle, which, it has been supposed by many, is suitable only for a community differently composed from that of Ephesus. It is pointed out that the earliest members of the Ephesian Church were evidently drawn from the Jewish synagogue, and it has been assumed that the membership of the community probably continued to be mainly composed of Jews. The epistle, on the other hand, it is declared, is addressed, some say chiefly, others say wholly, to a community or to communities of Gentile Christians. Here we are face to face with two questions, one of history, the other of exegesis, both of which have called forth conflicting answers.—The historical question has to do with the composition of the Ephesian Church. Turning to the historical statement regarding the founding of the church given in the Acts of the Apostles, we find it said that after Paul had left the synagogue for the school of Tyrannus, “all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, *both Jews and Greeks* (xix. 10), the Jewish exorcist’s defeat became known to *all the Jews and Greeks* dwelling in Ephesus (ver. 17), and evidently the “much people” turned away in Ephesus, as well as throughout Asia, whose conversion affected the trade of the silversmiths (ver. 26 ff.), must have been Gentiles and not Jews. The impression left upon the mind of the

reader of that whole chapter is, that after the close of Paul's three months' activity in the synagogue his converts were drawn mainly from the Gentile section of the population. It may also be noted that those of Asia named in chap. xx., Tychicus and Trophimus, were evidently Gentiles (see also chap. xxi. 29). The earliest converts were Jews, and would keep for a time the pre-eminence in the Christian community; but after a time the Gentile converts, numerically and perhaps socially important, would come, it may be unduly, to assert themselves.—The exegetical question has to do with the indications afforded by the epistle itself with regard to the parties to whom it was addressed. Almost all who reject the Ephesian destination of the epistle consider that it is addressed to Gentile Christians, whether of one or of several communities. The passages relied upon as supporting this view are, Eph. ii. 11 f., 19, iii. 1, iv. 17. From these it is indeed quite evident that the community addressed embraced a large Gentile element, which had apparently been inclined to treat in a somewhat inconsiderate and overbearing manner the smaller Jewish section, whose claims to recognition are insisted upon by the apostle, when he recalls the fact that they had first hoped in Christ, and that, though now the middle wall of partition is broken down, they had been nigh when the Gentiles still were far off. With the exception of those passages referred to in which the Gentile section of the church is addressed, we have no reason to suppose that the epistle is addressed to a community different in composition from the ordinary Christian communities of mixed Jewish and Gentile membership, such as undoubtedly existed at Ephesus.

Having thus reviewed the main difficulties experienced by those who decline to accept the traditional theory of the destination of our epistle, we now pass on to consider the various alternatives that have been suggested. Suggestions of various kinds have been proposed, each designed to obviate some special difficulty, but accomplishing this, as will be seen, only by leaving out of account some other aspect of the problem that equally demands an explanation. The several solutions that have been attempted may be roughly classified under two heads. We

Alternatives.

Epistle to the
Laodiceans.

have, first of all, the proposal of Marcion to identify our Ephesians with the Epistle to Laodicea of Col. iv. 16, by simply altering the title. Then we have the theory of a circular letter, first seriously elaborated by Usher in his *Annales Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, 1650. This idea, which has been very widely accepted, is presented by different scholars with considerable variations and modifications in detail. According to some, Laodicea was one of the churches for which it was destined, and the copy of it lying at Laodicea was the epistle referred in Col. iv. 16, and this name is there given it simply because the copy lying there was the one most easily procurable by the Colossians. Others regarding Ephesus as the chief city of the district, in which they suppose the epistle to have circulated, refuse to burden their theory with any reference to Laodicea. By others, again, it is regarded as a letter to Gentile Christians generally, without any local destination.

Marcion, as we have seen, in his Canon of Scripture altered the title of the epistle from that which had been by tradition assigned to it, styling it the Epistle to the Laodiceans. This is in accordance with the statement of Tertullian, *Adv. Marcion.* v. 11, 17. The account given by Epiphanius, *Hæres.* xiii. 9, is confused and untrustworthy, according to which Marcion had some parts of an Epistle to the Laodiceans, but yet had the Epistle to the Ephesians ranked as seventh in his list. It is quite evident that, in the drawing up of his Canon of Scripture, Marcion was guided not by historical facts such as determine the question of the genuineness or non-genuineness of particular books, but by purely subjective considerations connected with his doctrinal and ecclesiastical scheme. His list has no authority in evidencing the acceptance or rejection by the Church of this or that other writing, and is mainly important on account of the criticism which it occasioned on the part of ecclesiastical authorities of that age. Though it does not appear how, it yet seems certain from the tendencies of the man, that Marcion regarded the transference to Laodicea of the epistle traditionally assigned to Ephesus, as conducive to the advantage of his system. It may have been that the presence of a specially

strong anti-Judaic party in Laodicea might give a greater verisimilitude to his exaggerated, ultra-Pauline interpretation of the epistle, when it had been assigned to that particular community. The name was no doubt suggested to him by the reference to an epistle addressed to that church in Col. iv. 16, combined with the previous statements, chap. ii. 1, 2, about the Church of Laodicea as one in which the apostle was deeply interested, but had never been able in person to visit. By calling attention to those points, he hoped, as Tertullian suggests, to win fame as a very diligent inquirer. The mere transference of the locality of the receiving church from Ephesus to Laodicea does not serve to solve any difficulty, and, like most rash guesses, it somewhat seriously increases the complexity of the problem. Eadie very naturally expresses his astonishment that such an opinion should have been adopted by any succeeding writers. It has been reasserted, however, by Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ* (1790), sec. vi. 4, whose statement of the problem is highly creditable in one writing a century ago. What makes the mere renaming of the epistle utterly unsatisfactory is just this, that were it correct we should certainly have had Laodicea named where tradition puts Ephesus.¹—Very few modern critics seem inclined to revive the theory in the old form. Yet the idea of associating our epistle with Laodicea, and finding in it the apostolic writing referred to in Col. iv. 16, has proved peculiarly fascinating to Biblical critics, and even though the mere substitution of Laodicea for Ephesus is admitted to be insufficient as the basis of a theory, attempts are made by the most sober and accomplished scholars to prove that Laodicea was the chief of a group of churches for which the epistle was intended. Rübiger (*De Christologia Paulina*, p. 48, Breslau 1852) represents the apostle as having written the Epistle to the Colossians on the ground of information received from Tychicus and Onesimus, which accounts for the distinctive and special character of its contents. When this had been done, Tychicus gave a further

¹ Weiss, *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 342. See also an elaborate criticism of the theory of Marcion as rendered by Holzhausen in Harless, *Commentar, Einleitung*, xxxii.—xxxvii.

report of the other churches in the same group with Colossæ, and successfully urges the apostle to write a more general epistle of an encouraging and instructive character to that group of which Laodicea was the centre, "which," says Rübiger, "I suspect to be what we call the Epistle to the Ephesians, and what we styled in Col. iv. 16, "the Epistle from Laodicea."

Non-Pauline
Ep. to the
Laodiceans.

Before going on to speak of the circular letter theory, which is not necessarily connected with the identification of our epistle and that to Laodicea, though many of its advocates do entertain this opinion, we may state what in the earlier ages was said or known about an epistle bearing the designation to the Laodiceans. As Marcion's proposal to alter the title of the canonical Epistle to the Ephesians did not find any support, a peculiarly tempting opportunity was presented to literary aspirants to exercise their powers upon the production of a writing that might pass for the lost Epistle to the Laodiceans. It is certain that a forged epistle under this name made its appearance at a very early date. Though by no means free from doubt, the reference in the Muratorian Fragment, written about A.D. 170, to the Laodicean Epistle, alongside of an otherwise unknown Alexandrian epistle, as devised in support of the Marcionite heresy, is probably to one of the earliest of the forgeries under this name. If so, this Marcionite Epistle to the Laodiceans, the production probably of a disciple of Marcion, who found that "the Ephesians" was holding its old name, and was not, perhaps, sufficiently pronounced in its Marcionite teaching, is no longer extant nor elsewhere mentioned. Jerome, writing in A.D. 392, in his *Vir. Illustr.* 5, speaks of an epistle to the Laodiceans which was read by some but not accepted as an epistle of Paul. Timotheus of Constantinople, in A.D. 511, as quoted by Lightfoot, *Colossians*, p. 293, in a list of apocryphal works, mentions a forgery of the Manicheans which passed under the name of the Epistle to the Laodiceans. If he is right in regard to the doctrinal tendency of this spurious epistle, then it is another production, besides the Marcionite document, which is no longer extant. The so-called Epistle to the Laodiceans which has come down to us is a colourless tract, made up of extracts from canonical

epistles. The twenty short verses of which it is composed are mainly copied from Galatians and Philippians. It never received canonical authority, though often printed among the canonical books; and, strangely enough, we find Gregory the Great and other distinguished teachers of the Western Church, from the sixth to the fifteenth century, maintaining its Pauline authorship, and recommending it as edifying though not authoritative. Such were the attempts made to produce an epistle that would fulfil the conditions of Col. iv. 16. To no one does it seem all that while to have occurred to fall back upon, or to say anything in support of, the theory of Marcion.

In quite recent times, it has become a widely-accepted opinion that Laodicea was one of a group of churches for which the epistle was intended, and so the notion of the Laodicean destination of the letter is combined with the circular letter theory. Godet, in his paper on "The Epistle to the Gentile Churches,"¹ makes an elaborate attempt in this way to identify the Laodicean Epistle of Col. iv. 16 with an Epistle to the Ephesians. On the basis of what we have already characterised as an entirely false exegesis of chap. i. 15, iii. 2, iv. 21, as implying that the apostle had never visited those whom he there addresses, and proceeding on a complete misunderstanding of chap. vi. 21, as indicating several churches rather than several saints or believers, the commentator pictures Tychicus arriving at Ephesus with his three letters, one for Colossæ, one for Philemon, and one for the Phrygian churches of Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colossæ, etc. At this point in his journey he halts until he has a sufficient number of copies of this third epistle prepared, so that he shall not be detained at any of the churches embraced in his commission, while the epistle, after having been read, is being transcribed for future reference, but may simply leave the copy written out for that particular church by the Ephesian scribe. This being done, Tychicus finds that he can afford to leave the Ephesians a copy, but, strangely enough, they will not be satisfied with anything short of the original document from

¹ *Expositor*, 1887, 3rd Series, v. 376-381.

which these transcripts had been made. And so Laodicea, which had been mainly in the apostle's mind, as the metropolis of the district in which the churches addressed were situated, gets an ordinary copy like any of the other Phrygian churches, and Ephesus, which was not one of the Phrygian churches unvisited by the apostle, and so had not been in the writer's mind at all, gets the precious original. It might have been supposed that Tychicus, having lengthened out his sojourn at Ephesus until he secured so many copies of his circular epistle that he could feel justified in leaving the original behind him there, would have carried away with him a copy for each of the churches intended. Godet, however, informs us that this was not so. He had none for Colossæ. And this was not an oversight or miscalculation on the part of Tychicus. It must have been deliberately done; for had he not read in the Epistle to the Colossians the apostle's injunction that the Colossians should send to Laodicea for the copy addressed to that church, and make use of it? He must therefore be careful to put no stumbling-block in the way of the Colossians to prevent them fulfilling the command of the master Paul. This attempt to identify our epistle with the one referred to in Col. iv. 16, and at the same time account for its traditional ascription to the Ephesian Church, like Marcion's theory, removes no previous difficulty, and even more than this, it adds not a few serious complications. To any one who will accept these preliminary hypotheses as honest history, all the rest must be easy. When in later times the epistle came into request in the Western churches, it was to Ephesus, the great emporium of trade, that they applied for copies, and all the more readily would they do so if they knew, as the Ephesians would be very sure to tell them, that the document lying there was the original. Thus the name of Ephesus becomes associated in the early ecclesiastical tradition with the epistle which, in its author's intention, had an altogether different destination.

Lightfoot. Lightfoot also believes that the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians was a circular letter intended for the Asiatic churches, and holds that "educated opinion is tending, though slowly," in the direction of identifying it with

the Epistle to Laodicea of Col. iv. 16, and that "ultimately this view will be generally received."¹ He reserved a detailed statement and vindication of this position for the Introduction to his Commentary on Ephesians to which these questions most appropriately belong. The lamented death of this distinguished scholar deprives us of the hope of seeing this theory set forth in its final and most effective form. It would be impossible accurately to surmise the particular positions which Bishop Lightfoot might have adopted, had he been permitted to elaborate his views in the work upon the epistle before us which he projected, and it would be altogether unbecoming and unfair to make any such attempt. We have, however, in his recent treatise on the Ignatian Epistles, a single sentence, from which it is clear that he did not contemplate the assigning of our epistle to the Phrygian churches in such a way as to exclude the Church of Ephesus from the circle of its readers. "Though St. Paul's so-called Epistle to the Ephesians," he says, "was probably a circular letter, yet even on this hypothesis Ephesus was the principal church addressed"² Similar to this is the view of Westcott and Hort, who argue for the circular letter theory on the ground of the exceptional generality of the language, and the absence of local and personal allusions by which the epistle is characterised. Those accomplished critics, however, distinctly relieve themselves of the complications and difficulties caused by the identification of the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians with the Laodicean Epistle of Col. iv. 16. "St. Paul might naturally take advantage of the mission of Tychicus, to write a letter to be read by the various churches which he had founded or strengthened in the region surrounding Ephesus during his long stay, though he might have special means for writing separate letters to Colossæ and Laodicea."³ The range of its circulation is thus very considerably narrowed, and the plausibility of the theory correspondingly enhanced. The main difficulty encountered

¹ Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 5th ed., pp. 37, 281, Lond. 1880.

² Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, part ii.; *Ignatius and Polycarp*, ii. 23, Lond. 1889.

³ Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, vol. ii. App., p. 124, Cambridge 1882.

by the theory, as rendered by Lightfoot, lies in the heterogeneousness of the communities associated as readers of the one epistle. It is easy to understand how, in writing to Colossæ and to Laodicea, which were distant but eight miles from one another, neither of which had been visited by the apostle, in both of which the Jewish element in the population was particularly large, the apostle would deal with matters of common interest, and express himself in such a way that the two letters might be regarded as common to both.

The circular letter theory, in all its various forms, is beset with insurmountable difficulties. Most unsatisfactory is that form of it which seeks to maintain the identification of it with the Laodicean epistle. If the epistle lying at Laodicea were the letter carried thither by Tychicus, when on his way to deliver at Colossæ the epistle destined to that church, the messenger must have put into the hands of the Colossians the epistle enjoining them to send to Laodicea for that other epistle on the very day, or, at furthest, on the day succeeding that on which he had left Laodicea. Is it conceivable that Tychicus could have read Col. iv. 16 as an injunction to obtain an epistle which he had the day before read in the neighbouring church of the Laodiceans? Undoubtedly, had it been Paul's intention that the letter written by him at the same time as the Epistle to the Colossians should be read by Tychicus at Laodicea, and should be afterwards read by the members of the church at Colossæ, he would have instructed Tychicus to take it with him after reading it at Laodicea, that he might communicate it also to the Colossians. Forming an opinion purely from Col. iv. 16, any one who had no theory to support would certainly think of an epistle written and sent to Laodicea some time previously. On the occasion of his visit to Colossæ, Tychicus had evidently not been to Laodicea, otherwise he could have brought the epistle with him, and so the apostle bids the Colossians send for it. No one would have hesitated in asserting that the Laodicean epistle is one of the lost epistles of St. Paul,¹ had it not been thought desirable to

¹ Article by Dr. Gloag on "The Lost Epistles of St. Paul" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* for 1872, pp. 320-323.

secure another destination for the epistle usually assigned to the Ephesians. But even when unencumbered by this reference to Laodicea, this circular letter theory fails to commend itself as a solution of the problem. If the generality of the language and the freedom from personal allusions, which, according to Westcott and Hort, characterise this epistle, make its destination to the Church of Ephesus doubtful or impossible, can we regard the slight extension of its range to a few daughter churches in the immediate neighbourhood, among whom in any case a communication received by the parent church would most likely be circulated, as contributing in any measure to remove the difficulty? It seems to us that this circular letter theory has force only in the way of obviating the objection presently referred to, when the range embraced is very considerable, and then the heterogeneousness of the different communities included, already spoken of, presents new difficulties from the opposite direction.

Then, again, those who regard the external and internal evidence against the Ephesian destination of the epistle as more serious than we have found reason to consider it, and consequently agree to the omission of the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ from the text, find themselves face to face with peculiar difficulties in translating the passage from which the words are withdrawn. They have to choose between joining the words "who are" with the preceding "saints," or with the succeeding "faithful." Those who adopt the former alternative, render the whole clause, "the saints who are *really such*" (Schneckenburger, etc.). These words given in italics are utterly unwarranted as a translation of the text, and as gratuitous additions, which entirely alter the sense of the clause, cannot be allowed. The necessity for adding them, in order to make translation possible, condemns the theory that deprives the sentence of such terms of local designation as the construction of the sentence clearly requires. Those who adopt the other alternative, render the other clause thus, "the saints who are also believers" (Hofmann), "the saints who are also faithful" (Meier). Against the first form it may be said that believing in Christ does not add anything to the idea of New Testament

sainthood. It is advocated by Weiss (Herzog, *Real Encyclopædie*, 1st ed. xix. 480), on the ground that it is meant to distinguish New Testament from Old Testament saints; but there is no such contrast suggested by the passage. Then, "faithful or steadfast" is not the meaning of the word here, but "believing," *i.e.* exercising faith.

The unsatisfactoriness of all attempted renderings of this form of the text is so apparent, that it is now admitted by most expositors that the words as they stand, without *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ* or some similar phrase, are untranslatable.

Blank Those who reject the words in question are there-
Space. fore now for the most part disposed to advocate the theory of a blank space where in our text *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ* stands, which was filled up in the various copies with the name of the particular church for which it was destined. Now, such a device as this is neither ancient nor dignified. The only purpose that could be served by it would be the gratification of a little childish desire on the part of little village communities that they should be singled out by the great apostle, and honoured by a special letter from him with their own name upon it. To fill a blank space on a tract with the name of a village or parish, may be a comparatively harmless tribute to the self-importance of the inhabitants, but recourse to such a trick in order that the Ephesians, the Laodiceans, etc., should each think the epistle the outcome of the writer's interest in themselves peculiarly, is surely much more reprehensible. Paul's uprightness of character was sufficiently well marked to preserve him from any such questionable and undignified device.¹

¹ "The hypothesis of a blank space, or the theory of a circular letter, is not only without example in antiquity, other forms to meet such a case being given in 1 Cor. i. and 1 Pet. i., but is also an unrealisable conception. Who would on each occasion fill up the blank? One who would play the tract distributor going round with this epistle, taking his orders, perhaps, from a list of names supplied by the apostle? Or the churches that would make a transcript and send it on? And why, then, did the transcribed text not run either *τοῖς ὁσιν ἐν . . .* or simply *τοῖς ἁγίοις*, with a space between *τοῖς* and *ἁγίοις*, or after *ἁγίοις*? But how are we to explain the fact, that of all the other addresses no trace remains, and that none of the other churches concerned have contested with Ephesus its right to the exclusive possession of the epistle?" (Von Soden, *Hand-Commentar*, III. i. 78). Repudiating the circular letter theory and that of the Pauline

Pauline
Circular
Epistles.

If, however, it had really been the apostle's wish that this particular epistle should have circulated in any special group of churches, he knew well how to indicate this without having recourse to any such manœuvre. We have specimens from his hand of genuine circular epistles, and from them we see how the apostle could give expression to his intention. The Epistle to the Galatians is addressed to "the churches of Galatia," which means no doubt that it should be read in each Christian community within the province so named. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians is addressed "to the Church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia." Probably also the "every place" of the address of First Corinthians applies to the smaller communities which regarded Corinth as their metropolis. Here we see how the apostle could certainly have expressed himself, if he meant to write a general epistle that could be of interest to and be read by the churches that were grouped around Ephesus.

Difficulties
may be
explained.

We find, then, that no evidence has been adduced to shake our confidence in the Ephesian destination of the epistle. Meyer, who is thoroughly satisfied with the proof of the presence of the words *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ* in the text, admits that but for this he does not think Ephesus would have been thought of as the church for which the epistle had been written. The general tone is felt by him and by many others to be less free and familiar than might have been expected in correspondence with a community so well known to the writer as that of Ephesus. Circumstances may have occasioned this, which may have been well understood by the receivers of the letter, or easily explained by Tychicus. The fervour of his thanksgivings and the unction of his prayers, in which the apostle seems here to have excelled himself, surely suggests a community personally known rather than one known only by report. Then the generality of language, and authorship, Von Soden considers it to have been addressed to Gentile Christians in all places, and accounts for its becoming located in Ephesus, and associated with the church there, by the conjecture that it may have been written in Ephesus, or that the original was preserved there and regarded as a precious possession, or that the Ephesians had taken to the epistle, and found it attractive and useful to them in a quite peculiar manner.

the absence of personal allusions, would call for explanation as well in a circular letter as in an epistle to a particular church, if we consider the tone and style of the genuine circular or provincial epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians.

In view of the contents, therefore, as well as from what we know of the history of its transmission in the early Church, we do not hesitate to accept the traditional destination of the letter as the Epistle to the Ephesians.

4. CHARACTER AND TYPE OF DOCTRINE.

General
Laudation. From the wealth of ideas and sustained grandeur of style which characterise this epistle, it has been the subject of enthusiastic admiration on the part of all in every age who had any love for and experience of the deep things of God. "The epistle," says Chrysostom in the Preface to his Homilies on Ephesians, "overflows with lofty thoughts and doctrines. In this scripture the apostle reveals what he had scarcely anywhere else expressed." Coleridge, in his *Table Talk*, has pronounced it the divinest composition of man, embracing every doctrine of Christianity. Godet considers that in this epistle, as compared with his earlier writings, Paul speaks that wisdom which he declared to the Corinthians could only be uttered among those that are perfect. Westcott classes it along with the writings of St. John as containing "the complete solution of the greatest problems to which the thoughts of men are now being turned—the solidarity of humanity and the relation of our world to the whole Kosmos." "In the depth of its theology," says Farrar, *Messages of the Books*, p. 334, "in the loftiness of its morals, in the way in which the simplest moral truths are based upon the profoundest religious doctrines, the epistle is unparalleled."

Köstlin and
Pfleiderer. Only a few modern critics whose judgment has been warped by their theories of the authorship of the epistle, and its relation to the works of Paul, have ventured to speak in a depreciatory manner of its style and contents. On the other hand, several of the most distinguished opponents of the Pauline authorship of the epistle, such as Köstlin and

Pfleiderer, have heartily recognised the charm of its style, and have assigned to it the highest rank as marking the utmost development of the Pauline doctrine. Both of these distinguished theologians consider the Epistle to the Ephesians to have been the work of a later Paulinist, who combined the tendencies of the earlier Paulinism with those of John, and led the way to the development of a generous catholicism. In order to be in a position to estimate fairly the grounds which those writers have for assigning this epistle, on the score of its advanced doctrine, to a late Paulinist, we shall state as briefly as possible the views of these interpreters regarding the work of the writer of our epistle. We shall now give in order a summary of Köstlin's and Pfleiderer's readings of the doctrinal teaching of the treatise, which they regard as the final development of Pauline dogmatics.

Köstlin's Account of its Doctrine. According to Köstlin,¹ the writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians directs his polemic against teachers of a morally corrupt and paganising tendency (v. 11-14, ii. 2), whose vain words and cunning craftiness (v. 6, iv. 14) are spoken and exercised secretly apart from the public and officially recognised congregational assemblies (v. 12), in defiance of the regular discipline of the Church (v. 6, ii. 2), etc. This threatened to result in something like a schism between the Gentile and Jewish Christian portions of the community, which occasioned the writer's enlarging upon the doctrine of the unity of the Church (iv. 2-16), the extension to the Gentiles of the divine purpose of salvation, the blessings enjoyed by the Gentiles because they had entered upon the inheritance and privileges of the Jews (ii. 11-13), and the common salvation uniting Jews and Gentiles accomplished by the death of Christ (ii. 10 ff.). The grand object of the writer is to prevent this threatened breach between the Jewish and Gentile members of the Christian community. He distinctly states and firmly main-

¹ Köstlin, Carl Reinhold, *Der Lehrbegriff des Evangeliums und der Briefe Johannis und die verwandten neutestamentlichen Lehrbegriffe*, pp. 365-378, Berlin 1843. Pfleiderer says (*Paulinism*, ii. 165, note) that this statement by Köstlin of the doctrine contained in the Epistle to the Ephesians may be classed among the best writings on the subject.

tains the prerogatives and advantages of the Jews, but takes occasion therefrom to reflect upon the peculiar dignity of that inheritance on which the Gentiles have entered, by which they are closely and tenderly linked with the Jews. It is to divine grace that both Jews and Gentiles owe their advantages, for by nature they were both alike objects of the divine wrath and under condemnation. The purpose of the writer, in insisting upon the fact that the divine election of grace reaches Gentile as well as Jew, and in picturing in such black and horrible colours their natural condition out of Christ, is evidently to counteract the mischief being done by the false teachers, who sought to sow discord and to induce the Gentile Christians to go back to their old heathen modes of life.—Köstlin, having thus determined the main purpose of

the writer, proceeds to show at what points and in what respects he may be said to represent, at one time the spirit of Paul, and at another that of John. The author of Ephesians, in his estimate of the three religions—heathenism, Judaism, and Christianity—and their relations to one another, occupies precisely the standpoint of Paul. It is only with reference to their special covenant privileges that the Jews differ from others; viewed simply as men, the Jews, just like the Gentiles, are children of wrath. In consequence of their possession of these privileges, however, the Jews were *nigh* and the Gentiles were *far off*, *strangers and foreigners* (ii. 12, 13, 17, 19). But, on the other hand, the sketch of the religious character of heathenism in Ephesians (ii. 2, 12, iv. 18, v. 8) is conceived quite in the spirit and style of John (1 John ii. 8, v. 19, 20, iii. 1, ii. 15, iv. 4). After the manner of John, Christianity is contrasted with heathenism as the word of truth and as light (i. 13, v. 8), though truth and light are not yet, as with John, taken to describe the fundamental principles characteristic of the revelation, nor are they yet used in contrasting Christianity with Judaism. Christianity is not represented as occupying the third place alongside of heathenism and Judaism, as in John iv. 21 ff., but as the more perfect development of that which distinguished Judaism from heathenism. That “nearness” which was secured for the Gentiles by the blood of Christ, was beforehand the

possession of the Jews as members of the kingdom of God, to whom pertained the divine promises, so that even before Christ came they were called "those that were nigh" (ii. 17). In Christianity this nearness has been made more perfect by the abolition of the law (ii. 15), and has been more widely extended by the receiving of the Gentiles (ii. 13–19, iii. 6). What is new in Christianity consists not, as with John, in the abolition of Judaism, but in the accomplishment of the hitherto unfulfilled promises, and in the attaining unto a perfect peace with God, and very specially the extension of salvation to the Gentiles (iii. 5, 6). John, on the other hand, while he speaks (xi. 52) of Jesus' death availing for the scattered, does not regard the Jews as a favoured people, but as owing their salvation, just like the Gentiles in Ephesians, to the electing grace of God (John i. 13, vi. 44 ff.). The Epistle to the Ephesians, in showing how Christianity differs from and excels all other religions, assumes an eternal purpose kept secret in God (iii. 5, 9, 11), a mystery made known by apostles and prophets, which is quite in the style of John xv. 26, 27, xvi. 13. The conflict with the false Gnosis, begun in Colossians and fully elaborated in John, also makes its appearance in our epistle, and technical expressions occur (i. 8, 17, 18, iii. 3, 4, 5, 9, iv. 13, v. 10); but this Gnosis is not so clearly expressed as in John, but rather reminds us of the mystical style of the Apocalypse. The contents of the mystery is the purpose of God to gather together in Christ, as Head, all things in heaven and on earth (i. 10). The predestination doctrine thus set forth transcends the description of Christ's headship in Col. i. 16–18, and after the style of John bases the historical realisations of God's will on the eternal pre-existence of Christ (i. 10, iii. 9, iv. 8–16). Thus, in the later Paulinism, new elements were introduced which brought the system into touch with that of John.—In his doctrine of God, the author of the epistle makes subordinate the idea of the divine righteousness, and makes prominent the love of God as the moving principle of his work of redemption.—The Christology of Ephesians, in advance of that of Colossians, attaches itself to the doctrine of John in the greater independence of the person of Christ, not only in his

coming down from heaven (iv. 9, v. 31), but also in His freely offering Himself on the cross (v. 2, 31, 32), and to the older Pauline view in its representation of Christ as *ἡ κεφαλὴ τῶν πάντων*, which sets forth Christ as at once the unity and the model of all creation, by the declaration that He fills all things (i. 23, iv. 10), by the description of the Church as a perfect man, after the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (iv. 13).—The coming of Christ is the *ἀνακεφαλαιώσις* of heaven and earth; His coming proclaims peace and His death brings it (ii. 15, 17). Thus the separation from and the enmity with God which the law occasioned to both Jews and Gentiles, are removed, and peace is brought to both, peace with God and with one another as members of one body. He who died to accomplish this is raised by God to life and His own right hand and put over all things, and everything under Him is interpenetrated by Himself (i. 23, iv. 10), and at last everything will be actually united in Him (i. 10). In all this, the Pauline view prevails in the description of the reconciliation of heaven and earth in Christ, as Head; but the account of the love of God as the source of redemption, and of Christ as the Preacher of peace to Jews and Gentiles, and as Priest before God, reminds us of John. God receives Christ, not as one who had declared His righteousness as a sin-offering (Rom. iii), but as the free Son of God who had yielded Himself to the Father and reconciled the world.—The close relationship between our epistle and the writings of John is seen in its doctrine of the Spirit. John represents the death of Christ as a gain rather than a loss, since it secures the coming of the Paraclete (xvi. 7, xiv. 16, xv. 26, etc.); and so Ephesians represents the Spirit as the gift to the Church, bringing peace and grace, continuing the presence in it of the ascended Lord, and securing it against false doctrine (iv. 1–16). John, by his hypostasising of the Spirit, gave to it a more concrete existence; but even in Ephesians the Spirit appears as the independent active principle of knowledge in Christianity (iii. 5, iv. 14, 15). In John and in Ephesians the Paraclete is the prophetic Spirit in the apostles (John xvi. 13, xv. 26, 27; Eph. ii. 20, iii. 5, iv. 11). In the new as well as the old dispensation,

prophecy ranks as a foundation of the Church. By the Spirit, too, are Christians raised to seats in the heavenlies with Christ (ii. 6, iii. 16, 17), by which may be meant a personal fellowship as in John xiv. 23, since Eph. ii. 22 speaks not of the community generally, but of individual members of it (ii. 21; 1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16).—The Church is called a holy temple of God, having Christ as the Corner-stone, and apostles and prophets as foundation (ii. 20, 21); but most prominently it is described as the body of Christ (i. 23, iv. 12, 16), which in the end of the world will be the fulness of Him who fills all things, and therefore it. Christ and the Church mutually fill one another: He penetrates it as the living and all-embracing Head of all its members (iv. 15, 16); it fills Him, inasmuch as He in it builds up a body for Himself, fitted as nothing else is to be His own (iv. 12, 15). In a thoroughly Pauline manner the Church is thus represented as the body of Christ. On the other hand, the use of the marriage relationship, to illustrate the connection between Christ and His Church as Head and body, reminds us of John (Eph. v. 25 ff.; John iii. 29). Christ is not only Head of the body subject to Him, but is also Saviour of the body, having loved His Church and given Himself for it, and continues to afford nourishment to the members of that body. The idea of the relation of head and body, as well as that of marriage, is present in Eph. v. 25–31, and, throughout, the former relation is more prominent. We have not here, as in John, the substantial unity of several spirits put in place of the organic unity of head and body, but it is a substantial relationship, which marriage converts into an organic relationship, in which the *κεφαλή* loves the *σῶμα* like a second ego, and devotes itself to saving it and to effect an inseparable union with it (v. 31). We may therefore say that the Johannine theory of the spiritual, substantial unity of several individuals under this type of marriage here penetrates the Pauline conception of the bodily, organic union between head and body. In Eph. v. 25–27 the new idea is brought forward, that the purifying and sanctifying death of Christ avails pre-eminently for the Church as such, and has

for its end the presenting of the Church "holy and without blemish, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." The cleansing efficacy of Christ's death, excluding all sin as strictly as possible from the Church (v. 3-5), is represented in a manner similar to that in which it appears in John's writings (1 John iii. 3-6, i. 7-ii. 2). This similarity is not casual or accidental. To the Ephesians, as well as to John's writings, the doctrine of justification, and probably also that of the vicarious satisfaction, are wanting, and we have in both only the reconciliation (ii. 14), *i.e.* the restoration of the relation of sons to God (i. 5, ii. 18, iii. 12; 1 John iii. 21, iv. 17), the forgiveness of sins (i. 7), cleansing from sin itself (v. 27), and the new creation of man after the image of Christ (ii. 10), and of God (iv. 24). For the author of our epistle, the idea of cleansing and sanctifying is so essential, that in v. 26 baptism is described as the cleansing bath for perfecting the Church; and here again baptism is joined with the death of Jesus (v. 25), just as *αἵμα* and *ῥῆμα* are in the writings of John (1 John v. 6; John xix. 34). As the mighty opponent of Christianity appears the devil (vi. 11), *ὁ πονηρός* (vi. 16, comp. John xvii. 15), the prince of heathenism and heresy (ii. 2), not so individualised as John's *ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου*, but the chief of a host of evil spirits in the air or in heaven (ii. 2, iii. 10, vi. 12). Alongside of the conviction of the unique truth and grandeur of Christianity, rises that of the concrete reality of the opposing forces of spiritual powers. We are at first inclined to wonder at the almost Manichean hypostasising in John of the mighty principles of evil, but this is explained by a consideration of the gradual development of the doctrine of the devil. The author of the Epistle to the Ephesians seeks to make sin more terrible by a vivid representation of the superhuman might and vast number of the evil spirits (vi. 11, 12, 16), whereas John dwells rather on wickedness and hatred of the truth (viii. 44); and so, in place of subordinate demons, we have wicked men of this world forming the army of the prince of darkness (comp. Eph. iii. 10 with John xvii. 21, 23). Faith is presented under the aspect of steadfastness in resisting the attacks of the devil (vi. 16, comp. 1 John iv. 4), and as that which imparts unity to the whole

(iv. 5, 13). Knowledge shows one what he has in Christianity, in order that he may be confirmed in his faith, and that nothing of the content of Christianity may be wanting to him (Eph. v. 18, iii. 7, 20; John vii. 88, vi. 35, iv. 14). Abiding and growing in the truth are the preservatives against false doctrine (iv. 14, 15, 21, 24, 25, v. 9, vi. 14; 1 John ii. 21, 27, iv. 15-17, iii. 17-19). So, too, walking as children of light, with their fruit in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, the doing of God's will (vi. 7; 1 John ii. 17), the imitating of God and Christ (v. 1-2; 1 John i. 7, ii. 6, 20, iii. 6, 16, iv. 17), are ideas common to Ephesians and the writings of John. On the other hand, more like the early Paulinism is the call to put off the old man, to be renewed in the Spirit, and to put on the new man created after God in righteousness and true holiness (iv. 22-24). A peculiar importance is assigned to good works unknown to the earlier epistles; for though the writer of Ephesians is quite as emphatically a preacher of free grace and salvation, not of works but as the gift of God by faith and in accordance with God's eternal purpose, he yet extends this divine purpose to the good works which, as God's workmanship, we are to produce (ii. 10). By this inclusion of good works in predestination, they obtain a like importance with faith, although in the old Pauline view the predestined new creation of man includes this in itself, as in John the being born of God involves the doing of what is right (1 John ii. 20, v. 1, 2).—Again, what our epistle says of love is quite in the style of John. As it is the ground of God's redemption and of Christ's incarnation and sacrifice, so Christians, God's dear children, walk in love as God does (v. 1, 2, iv. 32, quite similarly to 1 John iv. 11, 7), as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us (v. 2, 25, quite as 1 John iii. 16; John xiii. 34, xv. 9). Love is that which holds the Church together (iv. 16), which establishes the Church itself and each of its members in the truth (iv. 15, ii. 3, 18; 1 John ii. 9-11, iii. 14; 2 John v. 6), though not expressly announced as the first precept of Christianity. So, too, are *εἰρήνη* and *ἐνότης* commended (iv. 3; John xviii. 21-23). Instead of the *ἔχειν ζωὴν*

Gnosis
in John
and Paul.

Love.

αἰώνιον ἐν ἑαυτῷ μένουσαν, the Epistle to the Ephesians speaks of the hope of it (i. 12, 18, iv. 4); ἀπολύτρωσις and περιποιήσις appear first in the end of days (i. 14, ii. 7, iv. 30). The evil day (vi. 13) is probably a special period in the future, when the struggle with the devil and his hosts is to be fought out, corresponding to the woes before the second coming (Rev. xvi. 4); so that here that is placed in the future which in John is ascribed to the victorious death of Christ. These and other doctrines, while retaining much in common with the older Paulinism, show at the same time undeniable departures from it, occasioned by an unmistakable approach to the teaching of John. The epistle occupies a conciliatory position midway between the doctrine of Paul and of John, yet so decidedly Johannine that a gospel composed on the lines of the epistle would stand nearer that of John than that of Luke, which is distinguished from Matthew and Mark by its distinctly Pauline tendencies.

This account of the doctrine of the epistle is by far the ablest that has been presented by the opponents of its genuineness. Any one who carefully follows its statements, will agree with Pfleiderer in saying that Köstlin's "statement of the doctrine contained in the Epistle to the Ephesians may be classed among the best writings on the subject." We shall have to inquire by and by how far similarity of view and statement between the writer of Ephesians and John suggests a transition from the one to the other, and how far these are consistent with the hypothesis of common authorship with the earlier acknowledged epistles of Paul. Apart from this, Köstlin's statement of the doctrinal contents of the epistle is of high importance.

Pfleiderer¹ represents the chief aim of the writer of the epistle, in a precisely similar manner, as the prevention of decline on the part of the Gentile Christians toward heathen immorality, and of their threatened separation from their Jewish Christian brethren. Paul had to contend against Jewish particularism for the equal justification of Gentile Christians; but here it is the

¹ Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, vol. ii.; *The History of Paulinism in the Primitive Church*, pp. 162-193, Lond. 1877.

want of love on the part of the Gentile Christians toward those who were the original possessors of those promises which now they shared. So the writer emphasises the fact that a certain precedence belonged to the Jews. His doctrine is distinctly that of Paul, but the state of things by which he is confronted is different. The problem now is, not as with Paul, the possibility of a Gentile Christianity, but the realisation of the universal Church. "The dogmatic views of the Epistle to the Ephesians rest wholly on Pauline foundations, but they have advanced beyond the older Paulinism in the direction of the theology of John. This is shown by the external dependence of this epistle on that to the Colossians, and probably also on the First Epistle of Peter; as well as the close connection of many of its ideas and turns of thought with the writings of John."¹ This is the thesis which Pfleiderer proceeds, largely on the basis of materials supplied by Köstlin, to endeavour to make good. He seeks to show that in regard to Christology the object of the author of Ephesians is, like that of John's epistles, to insist upon the continued connection between the exalted Saviour and the community on earth. Precisely like Köstlin, Pfleiderer calls attention to the greater independence ascribed to Christ in Ephesians, as compared with earlier Pauline writings; to the importance of the doctrine of the Spirit in the epistle; to the peculiar view of Christ's work set forth in it as the reconciliation of those that had been separated, the separated being Jews and Gentiles now made one in the body of Christ, and this act of Christ a sacerdotal act of self-devotion to the community, prompted by love, and so well-pleasing to God; to the effect of Christ's work and sacrifice in the sanctification of the community; to the subjective appropriation of salvation by baptism and faith; to the view given of the life of salvation, as putting off the old and putting on the new, this walk being maintained in love and light, while a warfare is carried on against the powers of darkness; and finally to the idea of the Church as a community of which the characteristic features are its purity and its unity;—in all this we have the point of view of Köstlin steadily maintained.

¹ Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, ii. 164, 165.

In these two treatises we seem to have all that can be said for the theory, that the doctrine of the Epistle to the Ephesians is of a type transcending that of Paul, and marking the transition to that of John.

We must now look back upon the representations given of the doctrinal contents of the epistle, to see how far it is a fair rendering of the apostle's thoughts, and whether, even where found accurate, it yields support to the main thesis of the

Real Object of the Author. critics.¹ Köstlin, in his first paragraph, seeks to show that the main object of the author of

Ephesians was to counteract the influence of false teachers, who were sowing discord between Gentile and Jewish members of the community, and were endeavouring to draw the Gentiles away to practise the old vices of heathenism. This is faithfully echoed by Pfleiderer. Now, if this could be proved, it would indeed go a long way to establish the lateness of the composition of the epistle. The condition of the community as thus represented is undoubtedly post-

Gnostic Pauline. The presupposition is that Gnostic Teaching. teaching has made considerable advance in the Ephesian Church, and that under its influence a tendency was manifested on the part of the Gentile portion of the community to depreciate the Jewish element. But this is a large assumption to make without proof. We are fairly entitled to ask, What evidence can be adduced in support of this hypothesis? Evidently nothing in the way of proof can be satisfactory, save some direct indications from the epistle itself that this was the trouble which the writer sought to heal. But in the epistle we fail to discover any traces of the polemic referred to. The doctrine that before God, in the

Jew and Gentile. matter of salvation, there is no longer any difference between Jew and Gentile, is enunciated here just as in the earlier epistles, especially those to the Galatians and to the Romans. It is the same doctrine, though in the

¹ A most admirable statement of the doctrine of the epistles of the imprisonment is given by Weiss, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, ii. 75-124, Edin. 1889. He shows in detail that while certain doctrines prominent in earlier epistles may not, owing to circumstances, have the same prominence given them, yet the same fundamental principles and the same religious historical points of view are maintained in these later writings.

one case addressed to communities where Jewish Christians were in the majority, or a tendency to Judaism prevailed, and in the other case to a community mainly composed of Gentile Christians. In both cases the apostle urges the fact of the abolition of the law, with its ceremonies and distinctions, so that no longer can Jews despise the Gentiles, nor Gentiles feel themselves separated in the way of inferiority or in the way of superiority from the Jews. Of anything like a schism between Jews and Gentiles, or any tendency on the part of the Gentiles to depreciate the Jews, we find no trace in this epistle. And further, in regard to the warnings addressed to the members of this Church against falling back into heathen practices, these seem most natural on the part of a faithful pastor, who remembered so well the depths of wickedness and moral degradation by which they were surrounded, in which before they had lived, and which from their earliest years they had been familiarised with and taught to regard as under the sanction and patronage of religion itself. There is surely no need of assuming the presence among them of regularly-organised heretical teachers, inculcating such views in the form of regular doctrines. No one whose preconceived theory did not require the assumption, would ever discover in the epistle any trace of later Gnostic teaching on these points.—In matters of detail we find Köstlin going far beyond his evidence, when he speaks of the doctrine of justification, and probably that Pauline Doctrine not of vicarious satisfaction, as absent, and their place taken by a somewhat vague and mystical doctrine of reconciliation. Köstlin and Pfeiderer simply misinterpret the writer of this epistle, when they represent him as maintaining a theory of reconciliation with God in a merely subjective sense, apart from the idea of sin-offering on the part of Christ, which is admittedly the doctrine of the earlier epistles. In reference to the passage on which they mainly depend for the support of this theory, Eph. v. 2, Weiss has well said: “It is not the giving up of Himself (the *παράδοῦναι ἑαυτόν*) on the part of Christ which is here designated a sacrifice well-pleasing to God, as it ought to be expressly stated, but what Christ gave Himself

for in our behalf, and the words in apposition refer to *ἐαυτόν*, and not to the whole clause. The general idea of a sacrifice (*προσφορά*) is more closely defined by *θυσία*, as a bloody sacrifice; and as it implies one offered for the good of another, it is characterised as a sin-offering, a point which Pfleiderer, ii. 181, overlooks.”¹ That our epistle gives prominence to the relation of sonship, the forgiveness of sins, and the cleansing influences of God’s grace upon those who are reconciled to God, by no means favours the idea that this reconciliation is merely subjective. The earlier epistles, in which the objective view of Christ’s work is distinctly prominent, are not wanting in emphatic insistence upon these same truths.—Köstlin very deliberately maintains that our epistle assigns a place to good works unknown to Paul. Pfleiderer is somewhat more cautious; but even he, after recognising the thoroughly Pauline type of doctrine in the rejection on the part of our author of all justifying merit in good works, finds the necessity of good works here connected *in a thoroughly original manner* with the unconditional nature of grace, by their inclusion in the predetermined purpose of grace, “so that they do not indeed form a condition of salvation which precedes or goes with anything else (with faith, according to James ii. 22), but are a task which is set and made practicable by means of the grace which is received freely and without price” (Eph. ii. 10). Köstlin apparently means the same thing when he says that in the earlier epistles these good works are included in the new nature which is the subject of God’s eternal purpose, whereas in Ephesians they are included along with faith in the predestinating decree. This, Köstlin thinks, makes good works a condition of salvation co-ordinate with faith; but Pfleiderer feels that this is going too far. Both, however, insist that good works have here a place which Paul would not have yielded them. Is this so? Can any proof be advanced in support of such a statement? It does not seem that there is any essential difference between the position assigned to good works in Ephesians, and that assigned to them in Romans and other earlier epistles. Let us simply compare the language

¹ Weiss, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, ii. 82.

of our epistle (i. 5, ii. 10), where God is said to have predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, and to have created us in Christ Jesus unto good works, with Rom. viii. 29, where it is said that God predestinated us "to be conformed to the image of His Son;" and it will be seen that the idea in both is precisely the same. As sons of God these good works are set us as a task, to use the words of Pfleiderer, "and made practicable by means of the grace which is received freely." This surely is the doctrine of Romans, as distinctly and as explicitly as it is that of Ephesians.—In regard to other points in which Köstlin and Pfleiderer consider our author to be on Pauline lines, yet with an inclination to Johannine phrases and turns of thought, and in regard to the nature of the relations subsisting between our epistle and that to the Colossians, we need only say that these are sufficiently explained by what, in treating the question of authenticity, has been said of the apostle's development as a writer and a thinker, and by the historical circumstances of the composition of our epistle.

Paulinism
in most
developed
form.

We have now before us materials sufficient to enable us to form an estimate for ourselves of the doctrinal contents of the epistle, and of the special type of doctrine therein represented.—We can have no hesitation in pronouncing the epistle the most developed exposition of Pauline doctrine,—the utterance of the apostle's own matured Christian experience addressed to readers ripe for instruction in the mysteries of the kingdom of God.—The parties addressed are the members of the

Jews and
Gentiles.

Church of Ephesus, which was composed mainly of Gentile Christians. He gives thanks to God on their behalf; and inasmuch as they had not been privileged with that early religious instruction which Jewish youths enjoyed, he seeks to secure their intelligent participation in his thanksgiving, by dwelling upon the several steps in the history of redemption. In this way he puts them in remembrance of his own faithful teachings during the period of his own personal ministry among them. He lingers upon points which would have been passed over as familiar commonplaces had he been writing to Jews, and yet he deals

with his subject in an elaborate and thorough manner, such as he would not have adopted toward recently-called and imperfectly-instructed Christians. The character and position of those whom he addresses, lead him to give special prominence to what he calls the mystery that had been made known to him. The unfolding of this mystery occupies the attention of the apostle throughout the whole of the distinctively doctrinal part of the epistle. The knowledge of this mystery he claims to have himself received by special revelation, and he speaks with confidence of the exposition which he had given of it in this very epistle (iii. 3, 4). It is this making known of the mystery which constitutes the distinctive characteristic of the writing. Elsewhere he had treated polemically the exclusive claims of Judaism; but here, in a purely didactic style, he gives a manual of direction, doctrinal and practical, for the guidance of the Gentile Christian community. This quite sufficiently accounts for the prominence given to the proclamation of the mystery. The apostle's idea of mystery is that of something which had been kept hidden for ages, and could be made known only by means of revelation. What human skill and investigation could never have discovered, had been given him by a dispensation of the grace of God (iii. 2, 3). The contents of this mystery are expressly communicated in two passages in the epistle (i. 9, 10, iii. 6, 7). We have, first of all, the broad general statement of the whole mystery, which consisted in the gathering together in one, in the fulness of time, all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, in Him in whom Paul and his fellow-Christians had their inheritance, according to God's predestinating grace. It is on the basis of this revelation that the apostle founds his teaching concerning the forthputting of God's power in Christ as the Head, and in believers in Christ as members of His body; the divine purpose that they should be gathered together in one is accomplished by this, that it is the same power which works in the one and in the other,—in Christ's resurrection and exaltation, and in the believer's quickening and spiritual restoration. And, further, it is this divine purpose which forms the foundation, not only of the unity

between the Head and the members, between Christ and believers, but also of the unity of the members among themselves, as members in the one body of Christ, so that the far-off are made nigh, and between Jew and Gentile in Christ there is no longer any difference. This breaking down of the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, as members of the one Church of Christ, constitutes the other part of the mystery now revealed, in regard to which the apostle claims, not indeed exclusive knowledge, for the knowledge of it is shared by the holy apostles and prophets of the new dispensation, but yet a special and pre-eminent degree of knowledge and skill in its exposition (iii. 3, 4).—In the elucidation of this important truth, the apostle elaborates throughout this epistle the idea of the Christian community

or Church, with an amplitude of detail and a wealth of illustration such as we find in none of his other writings. The doctrine of the Church is the characteristic feature of the epistle, and the special contribution which it makes to the development of theological thought. Throughout the epistle the idea of the Church is illustrated by two figures, that of *the Temple of God* and that of *the Body of Christ*. Both figures are introduced and illustrated in connection with the unfolding of the mystery of God's grace in bringing Jew and Gentile together in one community through the redemption of Christ.—Believers in Christ Jesus, whether Jews or Gentiles, are described (ii. 19–22) as stones for the building of the holy temple which is to form a habitation of God, with the gospel of Christ proclaimed by New Testament apostles and prophets as its foundation and Jesus Christ as its chief Corner-stone. In this temple, when completed, made up of every building now in course of construction, all living stones operated upon by the Spirit shall find place, whatever their previous position and quality may have been.—Much more elaborately, however, does the apostle work out the other representation of

the Christian community as *the Body of Christ*
 Body of Christ. (i. 22, 23, iv. 12–16). The Church is described as the *pleroma* of Christ. According to this representation, the Church is that which is filled by Christ as the quickening,

vivifying Spirit (i. 23), and as the Head from which those influences proceed which afford compactness to the whole body, and supply suitable qualities to the several parts (iv. 15, 16). The perfection of the individual and the perfection of the community alike are reached, when the stage of perfect receptivity for Christ's own fulness has been attained (iv. 13). The Church is Christ's fulness only in proportion as it receives of that fulness. It is not described as His complement, as that which contributes to His fulness, but simply as that which He fills. In the more directly practical and ethical portion of the epistle, the apostle emphasises the ideas of the purity and the unity of the Church, both of these features being very evidently implied in the conception of the Body of Christ. This purity is regarded primarily as that of the community as an organised whole; but it is altogether a mistake on the part of Pfleiderer (ii. 192) to restrict this reference to the general idea of the community as an objective characteristic, and to deny that it may in any sense be considered a subjective ideal for individuals. The very figure of marriage, employed in the passage under consideration (v. 25-31), makes it inevitable that, from the primary reference to the community, we should pass over to the idea of the individuals composing that community. And so, indeed, it happens that while it is *the Church* that is sanctified and cleansed by the washing of water by the word, the accomplishment of this is seen to depend upon the cleansing of the individual members of the Church. That which cleanses is Christ's giving of Himself to the Church, but this again has its ground in the fact that we, *i.e.* individual men and women, are members of His body. He cares for and secures the purity of the individual because of the love which He bears to all the members of His own body. This purifying of individual members, which secures a purified community, must surely be a subjective ideal of the individual as well as an objective characteristic of the community. And precisely the same thing is true of the idea of the unity of the Church, as indeed Pfleiderer clearly perceives. It has its objective side in its one foundation on apostolic truth, and its vital connection with a common Lord (iv. 4-6).

This constitutes its corporate unity. But such unity can be brought about only when and in so far as members entertain in their hearts, and manifest in their lives, such principles as will contribute to the maintaining and strengthening of this bond. The Church is ideally one, and it is the duty of the individual members of the Church, because they are members one of another, by "speaking the truth with one another, by speaking this truth in love," by walking in love, by doing that which is good for the use of edifying (iv. 15, 25, sq., v. 2), to contribute toward the realisation of that grand ideal, according to which they shall all be one, even as God and Christ are one.

5. DATE AND RELATION TO OTHER EPISTLES.

Accepting the epistle as an authentic work of Paul, we have now to assign it its proper place among his writings. It is clearly one of the later productions of his pen, written in a prison (iii. 1, iv. 1, vi. 26), and representing, as we have seen, the most advanced stage of his doctrinal development. The position, therefore, which we must give it is among the epistles of the imprisonment, and the only difference of opinion among those who acknowledge the Pauline authorship of the epistle arises over the question as to whether it was written during the apostle's detention in Cæsarea or during his confinement in Rome.

The epistles belonging to this period are four—Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. It is quite evident that, while the three last-mentioned epistles go together in one group, Philippians stands by itself, whether as written before (Lightfoot, etc.) or at a later period (Weiss, Reuss, etc.).¹

Without going into detail, which is unnecessary for our present purpose, we here express our opinion that Philippians was written in Cæsarea, the earlier vigour of Paul's imprisonment there justifying the

¹ Lightfoot, *Philippians*, ed. 6, p. 31, 1881; Weiss, *Der Philipperbrief ausgelegt*, p. 27, Berlin 1859; Reuss, *History of the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament*, § 131, p. 129, Edin. 1884.

references to severe treatment in the epistle, and the comparative liberty subsequently granted him giving ground for the statements regarding his ministry and the extent and range of his influence. We may thus assume that it was written in A.D. 59; and when thus its composition is brought within a year of that of the Epistle to the Romans, the very remarkable similarity in literary style and doctrinal tone between the two epistles is readily and naturally explained. There is no mention of Luke and Aristarchus, who went with Paul to Rome. During Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea they were probably resident in Jerusalem, and at most only occasionally visitors of the apostle in Cæsarea; but in the Roman imprisonment, as companions of his eventful voyage, and it may be both of them sharers of his captivity, they are naturally mentioned in the writings proceeding from his pen soon after his arrival in the great city. Then again, Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, makes no mention of the prætorium in connection with the Roman imprisonment, but only in connection with the Cæsarean imprisonment, and there is no reason to deny the local signification of the word, unless we are determined at all risks to make it apply to the imprisonment at Rome.¹

On the other hand, we have no hesitation in maintaining that Rome was the place where the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philémon other three epistles were composed. Just as the Epistle to the Philippians is, in respect of doctrine and style, closely associated with the Epistle to the Romans and the other great doctrinal epistles, so the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians and that to Philemon are associated, in respect of matter and form, with the Pastoral Epistles of a yet later period. Reuss, Meyer, and Schenkel,² are the leading authorities who persist in referring their composition to the period of the apostle's detention in Cæsarea. The arguments

¹ Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 99 ff., "The meaning of prætorium," where he argues that because the word, though used of palaces out of Rome, is not used of such in Rome, it must be understood of "the prætorian guard."

² Reuss, *History of the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament*, original ed. 1842; Meyer, *Commentary on Ephesians*, original ed. 1843; Schenkel, *Bibellexikon*, 1869. This theory had been started by Schulz in *Studien und Kritiken*, p. 612, 1829.

used by all are essentially the same: Cæsarea suits the fact of the presence of the runaway Colossian slave Onesimus, better than Rome; and Tychicus going from Cæsarea would reach Colossæ first, but from Rome he would reach Ephesus first, and the former route is that which their theory of the order of the Epistles to the Colossians and to the Ephesians requires. As to Onesimus, of course, there is nothing absolutely demonstrable one way or another; but it seems more likely that such a one would succeed in hiding himself in the vast multitude of mixed nationalities that were found crowded together in Rome, than in the comparatively small Syrian capital, while access to Rome, as the centre of the commercial and political world, would be much more easy than access to other cities greatly nearer in respect of locality. Then, in regard to the route pursued by Tychicus, the statement in Eph. vi. 21, 22, seems to imply that Paul had directed Tychicus not merely to continue his journey from Colossæ to Ephesus, but rather to halt for a little in his journey, in order to give them as well as the Colossians, to whom he was specially destined, particular information about his affairs. That no mention is made of Onesimus, in whom the Ephesians had no interest, and with whom, during the hurried visit of Tychicus, they would have no opportunity of making acquaintance, is just what might be expected. These three epistles are closely connected together: Ephesians and Colossians, by similarity of phrase and style, and expressly by having the one bearer commissioned to each in almost precisely identical terms; Philemon, as a private letter on a special subject to a member of the Colossian Church, regarding Onesimus, who also was a member of it. We might expect that the apostle, who had now been absent from the churches of Asia for about three years, should seize upon the earliest possible opportunity, after his arrival in Rome, to do for them by his pen what he could no longer perform in bodily presence by his living voice. Two eventful years in the history of Paul have passed since he wrote to the Philippians. The experiences of Cæsarea, where he had been brought into contact with such men as Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, with all the while long intervals

Soon after
reaching
Rome.

for quiet contemplation and reflection upon the ways and works of God, followed by the exciting adventures of his long voyage, diversified by various detentions and intercourse with men and people of the most diverse cultures and religions, culminating in his introduction to the great city toward which his earlier ambitions had powerfully drawn him, must in their combination have proved abundantly powerful to produce that rich spiritual development and maturity of religious thought and speculation, which so conspicuously characterise these writings, as compared with the keen and vigorous controversial and doctrinal epistles of the earlier period. Further, also, the apostle's own ideas in regard to the possibility of release are similar to those which he had entertained at Cæsarea when writing to the Philippians.¹ In either case, the entertaining of such hopes is in keeping with the conditions of his captivity only during the earlier periods of his residence respectively in Cæsarea and in Rome. We would, therefore, place the composition of these epistles in the end of A.D. 61 or beginning of A.D. 62.

The only other epistles ranked among the canonical writings of Paul are those to Timothy. We do not include the Epistle to Titus in this group. The heretical tendencies referred to in it are quite different from those referred to in the Epistles to Timothy, and suggest a much earlier period. The apostle warns the young missionary against Judaisers, more like those who had disturbed the churches of Galatia than those who were at work in Colossæ and Ephesus. We suppose the Epistle to Titus to have been written from Macedonia after Paul had left Ephesus (Acts xx. 1-3), and just about the

¹ Reuss, *History of the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament*, p. 129, says: "It is not correct to say that the keynote of this epistle, quite in contrast with Second Timothy, is joyful, and χαίρειν the refrain throughout. . . The uncertainty of the result is again expressed in ii. 23, the dreary situation of the present moment in ver. 27." It is quite evident, however, that dark and comfortless as his immediate condition was, he could entertain a hope that was very soon completely overthrown. In writing to Philippi he could entertain the hope of an early visit to Macedonia, and in writing to Colossæ of an early visit to Asia; but in writing at last to Timothy he can no longer indulge any such hopes.

time when he wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. This would be in the autumn of A.D. 58. He then intended, after visiting Corinth, to return from Greece to Macedonia, and had even made up his mind to winter at Nicopolis, where he wished Titus to join him, promising to send Tychicus, who was with the apostle then, or an otherwise unknown Artemas, to occupy his place in Crete (Titus iii. 12). And possibly enough this plan was carried out. In any case, the interval between the apostle's departure from Ephesus and his visit to Corinth, is the period to which we may most reasonably assign the composition of the Epistle to Titus. We have, therefore, here to do only with the First and Second Epistles to Timothy. If, with Reuss, Sabatier, and others, we insist upon placing the composition of the Epistle to the Philippians in the very latest period of the Roman imprisonment, we shall, of course, be obliged to say, like the last-named writer, that "the Pastoral Epistles (so-called) of necessity lie outside the known life of Paul."¹ Indeed, almost all critics and historians, who have regarded it as necessary to find room for all the four epistles in the period of the Roman imprisonment, feeling, as almost all have done, that a considerable space of time must have elapsed between the composition of the Epistle to the Philippians and that of the other three epistles, whether the first-named be regarded as first in chronological order or last, have been obliged to choose between the alternatives of rejecting the Pastoral Epistles, as outside the range of Paul's life, or conjuring up a purely fictitious release from the imprisonment at Rome, followed, after an interval of missionary activity, by a second imprisonment, ending in condemnation and death. The difference, in respect of style and contents, between the Epistles to Timothy and those to the Ephesians and Colossians, is not greater than we might expect from the interval of two years which separates the earlier from the later period of the Roman imprisonment. The errors combated in the later epistles are simply more developed forms of those to which passing allusions and occasional polemical references, of a more or less vague character, are made in the earlier writings. The

¹ Sabatier, *The Apostle Paul*, p. 22, Lond. 1891.

associates of the apostle are in part the same. Tychicus had gone to Ephesus, as bearer of the epistles to the Asiatic churches, and was still absent when the apostle wrote on the eve of his martyrdom (2 Tim. iv. 12). The reference to Timothy's commission in 1 Tim. i. 3 is to his original instructions, and points back to the period spoken of in Acts xx., when he was one of Paul's company, and was then apparently sent for a special purpose to Ephesus. The epistles may have been composed in the beginning and middle of A.D. 64.

This general survey of the circumstances attending the composition of the later epistles of Paul will suffice to indicate the period during which the Epistle to the Ephesians was written.

We have seen that the Epistle to the Ephesians and those to the Colossians and to Philemon constitute one group, all of them composed about the same time.

Relation between Ephesians and Colossians. The relationship between the Epistle to the Ephesians and the other epistles of Paul, in respect both of thought and of expression, is admitted by all, whether this be put down to careful and studied imitation, or be accepted as evidence of its Pauline authorship. In quite a special manner, however, the connection in contents and style between Ephesians and Colossians has called forth minute comparisons, upon which the question of the authenticity of one or both have, by many critics, been made largely to turn. It is admitted by Von Soden (*Hand-Commentar*, III. i. 94) that the characteristic positions of each epistle are peculiar to each. Thus, from Col. ii. 1–iii. 4, which states the theme and enunciates the special doctrinal contribution of the Colossian epistle, we have in Ephesians only a few unimportant expressions and phrases; and also from Col. i. 9–23, we have only a few terms reproduced in Ephesians, and even these, not without considerable modification. Also certain terms, *e.g.* οἰκονομία, μυστήριον, πλήρωμα, common to both, are used in the one in a sense different from that in which they are used in the other. The leading ideas, and the doctrinal and moral tendencies controverted, are different. Some of the favourite and peculiar expressions of Ephesians are not found in Colossians. Our critic, therefore, concludes that the difference of style, of ruling ideas, and

prevailing interest, proves diversity of authors, the writer of Ephesians purposely employing terms and phrases used in Colossians, and even, where his subject allows, copying the very language of the older writing. It is quite true that we have in Paul a most powerful and original writer, who has shown himself capable of treating the same theme without repeating himself. But we think a fair comparison of the two epistles will prove, that all the similarities which so readily attract attention, when considered in light of the many essential divergences, are not more than, or different from what, might be expected in the case of the practically contemporaneous composition of the two letters. Where the theme of the later epistle is distinct from that of the earlier, the language of that earlier letter is not imitated, for that would be unnatural, and would certainly have betrayed the hand of a copier; but where the themes coincide, there is no attempt, which would have been pure affectation, to secure the appearance of originality by replacing phrases still fresh in the memory by others used before, otherwise they would be un-Pauline, but not in this one most recent composition. To those

who maintain the Pauline authorship of these two Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, the question of their relative priority or posteriority is not one of any great importance.¹ If we regarded Ephesians and Colossians as so similar that the one must be the work of an imitator, then it would be of interest to determine which was the earlier and therefore the original. Those who take this position regard Colossians as Pauline (Klöpper), or Pauline with interpolations (Holtzmann), and Ephesians as the production of a later Paulinist of a more or

¹ Eadie, *Commentary on Ephesians*, p. xxxiv., has spoken of this as a "needless question." The following are in favour of the priority of the Epistle to the Colossians: Harless, *Commentar*, p. lx. 1834; Olshausen, *Commentary*, p. 118, 1840; Meyer, *Commentary*, p. 22, 1843; Eadie, *Commentary*, pp. xxxiv.-xxxvi. 1853; Ellicott, *Commentary*, p. xv. 1855; Alford, *Greek Testament*, vol. iii. 1856; *Prolegomena*, iv. 39-42. This, too, is of necessity the position of those who, like Klöpper and Von Soden, accept the Pauline authorship of Colossians while denying that of Ephesians. In favour of the priority of the Epistle to the Ephesians: Credner, *Einleitung in das Neues Testament*, § 157, 1836; Anger, *Ueber d. Laodiceerbrief*, 1843; Reuss, *History of the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament*, § 118, 119, 1884 (original ed 1842).

less developed type. Maintaining, however, as we do, the Pauline authorship of both, we can only express an opinion, after comparing the parallel sections in these two epistles, their general style and special doctrinal interest, as to whether the composition of the one may not have determined the writing of the other. There are certain phrases common to both epistles, such as "in whom we have redemption through His blood," "your faith in Christ Jesus and love to all the saints," etc., which seem original in the Epistle to the Colossians, and look in the Epistle to the Ephesians very much like those apt quotations which we use, with the feeling that the sentiment has been expressed once and for ever in words which cannot be improved. Thus we find also in Colossians certain terse and summary statements of truth, which are taken up in Ephesians in a somewhat different connection and wrought out in detail. A good illustration of this will be found in a comparison of Col. iii. 5-17 with Eph. iv. 17, 21. And once again, if we compare the section on relative duties in these two epistles, we shall find it more natural to regard the short and rapid statement of them in Colossians as the original, which was before the mind of the writer when he penned the Epistle to the Ephesians, in which, from the very nature of the composition, he required to linger over the details and allow each section to be coloured by the special character and specific aim of his writing. Thus in Ephesians he opens the division in question with the identical words used in Colossians, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands." In Colossians the introduction of these words had marked a new departure and formed the beginning of a distinctly new division. In Ephesians it occurs in immediate connection with an exhortation to orderliness of behaviour in the Church, where constituted authority must be recognised and subordination enforced. The parallel is therefore carried out between the submission of wives to their husbands and the submission of the Church to Christ. Much more of the same sort might be advanced, but this may be enough by way of illustration. What seems to be suggested by such comparison of parallel passages, as well as by the fact that Ephesians deals broadly

with the great theme of the Church in its Head and members, while Colossians deals with a special aspect of Church life as affected by particular heretical tendencies in the doctrine of its divine Head, is the priority of the composition of Colossians, and the subsequent origin of Ephesians, while still the inspiration and language of the earlier epistle are fresh in the mind of its author.

If Meyer's argument, on the hypothesis of the Cæsarean origin of these epistles, that Colossians would naturally be written first, inasmuch as it would be delivered before that other epistle meant for a church or churches to be reached subsequently, had any weight, then, on the hypothesis that these epistles were written at Rome, we would be obliged to assume the priority of Ephesians as addressed to the church that would be first visited by Tychicus. But there is no reason to suppose that the geographical distribution of the ecclesiastical communities must have determined the apostle as to the order of his composition. We do not assume that already, when he began to write, he had fixed the number and destination of his epistles. He begins, we suppose, with Colossians, without a thought as yet of writing any other. He has occasion to address the members of that church on points of vital importance, demanding immediate attention. While thus engaged, his friend Tychicus, who is acting as amanuensis and is to carry the apostle's message, himself probably an Ephesian, imparts some information as to the state of things at Ephesus, which leads the apostle to write also to that community, by the hand of Tychicus, a letter of encouragement, entirely free from controversy, and filled only with matter of edification and instruction.

The phrase "and you also," in Eph. vi. 21, implies that Colossians was already written, and that the readers of "Ephesians" would know that Tychicus had that epistle in his hand carrying it to Colossæ.

6. CONTENTS AND PLAN OF THE EPISTLE.

In this epistle, even more decidedly than in any other epistle of St. Paul, the impassioned character of the com-

position renders it difficult to arrange the contents according to any strictly logical and orderly scheme. Whatever the plan adopted, ideas will make their appearance under one head, which would apparently take rank more appropriately under another; or at certain points expression will be given to thoughts which, in a slightly different form and connection, have been introduced elsewhere.—Like all Paul's epistles, the Epistle to the Ephesians falls into two main divisions, the one doctrinal, the other practical; yet even this division holds only upon the understanding that the practical is not lost sight of in the doctrinal, and that the doctrinal is not forgotten in the practical. It might be more correct to distinguish the first section, embracing chapters i.-iii., as theological; and the second section, embracing chapters iv.-vi., as ethical.

On the basis of that general outline of the doctrine of our epistle which we have already given, we propose the following sketch as affording a convenient plan for the grouping of its principal contents:—

A. THEOLOGICAL PART—CHAPS. I.-III.

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| I. Address and Greeting, | Chap. i. 1-2 |
| II. The Operations of Divine Grace, | „ i. 3-14 |
| 1. What God the Father has done, | Chap. i. 3-6 |
| 2. What God the Son has done, | „ i. 7-12 |
| 3. What God the Spirit has done, | „ i. 13-14 |
| III. The Apostle's First Prayer for the Ephesians, | „ i. 15-19 |
| IV. Devotional Contemplation of God's great Power, | „ i. 19-ii. 10 |
| 1. Of God's Power operating in Christ, | Chap. i. 20-23 |
| 2. Of God's Power operating on the believer, | „ ii. 1-10 |
| V. The Fulness of the Gentiles, | „ ii. 11-iii. 13 |
| 1. What Grace has done for Gentiles who believed, | „ ii. 11-22 |
| 2. God's Grace toward Paul as Apostle of the Gentiles, | „ iii. 1-13 |
| VI. The Apostle's Second Prayer for the Ephesians, | „ iii. 14-21 |

B. ETHICAL PART—CHAPS. IV.-VI.

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| VII. Transition to more immediately practical part—Unity of the Faith, | „ iv. 1-16 |
| 1. The Calling of the Christian, | Chap. iv. 1-6 |
| 2. Means of Grace to make such Calling effectual, | „ iv. 7-16 |

VIII. The New Life,	Chaps. iv. 17-v. 21
1. Regeneration,	Chap. iv. 17-24
2. Bearing toward others,	iv. 25-v. 2
3. Personal Holiness,	v. 3-21
IX. The Family Life,	vi. 22-vi. 9
1. Duties of Husbands and Wives,	v. 22-33
2. Duties of Parents and Children,	vi. 1-4
3. Duties of Masters and Servants,	vi. 5-9
X. Armour for the Life of Temptation and Struggle,	vi. 10-20
XI. Commission to Messenger, and Benediction,	vi. 21-24

7. LITERATURE.

In presenting a list of the literature bearing upon the exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians, I propose to attempt a classification, in accordance with the several ends served or sought to be served by the various writers of commentaries, critical treatises, and practical discourses.

I. PURELY CRITICAL TREATISES, dealing with questions of introduction, and investigating the historical and philosophical difficulties in detail. Besides the critical commentaries, which are also exegetical:—

1. Holtzmann, *Kritik der Epheser-und Kolosserbriefe auf Grund einer Analyse ihres Verwandtschaftsverhältnisses*, Leipzig 1872, pp. 338,—discusses with great acuteness the relation of the two epistles to one another, and comes to the conclusion that Colossians, as we have it, is an interpolated epistle of St. Paul, whereas Ephesians is written by a Paulinist of the second century to whom we owe the interpolations of Colossians. Apart from the merits of this particular theory, the work is most useful and suggestive in its treatment and presentation of the various debateable matters respecting date, destination, and peculiarities of content.

2. Von Soden, "Der Epheserbrief" in *Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie*, xiii. pp. 103-135, 432-498 (1887),—treats (1) of the composition, (2) of the doctrinal peculiarities, and (3) of the origin of the epistle. He subjects the vocabulary and style of the writing to a careful examination, pp. 106-132, in which we find many interesting and helpful discussions of particular words and phrases; then he follows

the same course with regard to the meaning of peculiar expressions recurring frequently in the epistle (pp. 432-472); and, finally, he discusses the various suggestions that have been made to account for its origin, and the historical and critical facts which speak for or against these (pp. 472-498). He regards Ephesians as a post-apostolic catholic epistle, largely made up of Pauline material, the work of a διδάσκαλος "for the edification of the saints" (iv. 12). Together with Holtzmann's treatise, these papers of Von Soden's, together with the summary of results, modified in some particulars, in his *Hand-Commentar*, afford a carefully-methodised presentation of the materials, and a fair discussion of the main questions involved in the critical study of our epistle.

II. CRITICAL COMMENTARIES, dealing with questions of introduction, and also giving a full exegetical commentary on the text of the epistle:—

1. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Edin. 1880.—As a critical and exegetical commentary, the most useful of all. Without going into detailed exposition, or losing sight of the main point by following out details, he combines in admirable proportion thorough grammatical criticism, so far as that is likely to help the exposition, and the most able and sympathetic exegesis of the apostle's thoughts. Without exaggeration, the work may be described as absolutely indispensable to the student.

2. Ellicott, *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, Lond., 1st ed. 1855, latest ed. 1884.—Exhibits the well-known characteristics of this author's commentaries. As a grammatical commentary it is admirable, but on questions of exegesis and on points of criticism, other than verbal, it is not only meagre, but often in its statements jejune and unsatisfactory.

3. Harless, *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Ephesier*, Erlangen 1834.—This is by far the most elaborate critical commentary that has yet appeared on our epistle. Ellicott has described it as "the admirable exposition of Harless, which for accurate scholarship, learning, candour, and ability, may be pronounced one of the best, if not the very best,

commentary that has ever yet appeared on any single portion of Holy Scripture." This encomium, as most readers might be prepared to suppose, is greatly overstrained. The work has many faults. It is painfully prolix, and often pointless, and sadly wanting in vigour alike of thought and style. The author is constantly losing himself in detail, going into grammatical discussions of a pedantic character that only divert attention from the main point. He is also often dominated and biassed by his attachment to Lutheran Church doctrine. Yet, with all these serious drawbacks, the work deserves to rank among the greatest and most thorough expositions of this epistle.

4. Eadie, *Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, 1st ed. 1854, latest ed. Edin. 1883.—Not always reliable in discussions of grammatical details and in questions affecting the text, and sometimes diffuse and written in a rather exuberant and rhetorical style, but generally sound and sober in its exegesis. Because of the comprehensiveness of its plan, overtaking as it does, though not with an equal measure of success, the grammatical, critical, exegetical, and practical exposition of the epistle, it will always be found a useful aid to the busy minister and general student.

5. Hofmann, *Der Brief Pauli an die Epheser*, Nördlingen 1870.—Like all the works of this able theologian, ingenious and subtle in its exegesis, but often perverse and forced. The exposition is stimulating in no ordinary degree; though generally, perhaps, the views insisted upon must be finally rejected, the discussion is almost invariably interesting and invigorating, and opens up suggestions in various directions. No critic is more acute in discovering and laying bare the weak point in an opponent's argument or theory. As a criticism of all proposed expositions, Hofmann's work is most valuable.

6. Meier, *Kommentar über den Brief Pauli an die Epheser*, Berlin 1834.—An excellent exegetical commentary, not sufficiently well known. The exposition is full and satisfactory, and, in general, the author shows great judiciousness and an admirable sense of proportion in his treatment of the

themes presented by the text. He gives a particularly careful and well-balanced exposition of difficult passages, *e.g.* i. 23, iii. 19, iv. 13, and v. 11-14.

7. Von Soden, *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament*, Freiburg 1891, iii. 1, pp. 78-150.—The most perfect achievement in the production of a short commentary that has yet been made. In an introduction of twenty pages we have, on the basis of the detailed investigation referred to above, a most lucid and complete presentation of the main questions under discussion with regard to the origin, destination, character, and date of the epistle. The commentary on the text, comprised in fifty pages, is most suggestive, giving, generally in a single phrase, the result of the most careful scientific exegesis. The spirit of the author is admirable, and in his work we have one of the very best specimens of the reverent and devout treatment of the contents of the sacred writings by an advanced and free critic of text and history. It is in every respect, critically as well as spiritually, a very notable advance upon the work of Holtzmann, in a somewhat similar work, translated under the title, *Protestant Commentary on the New Testament*, by the Theol. Transl. Fund. It may be confidently recommended to advanced students.

8. Schnedermann, in Straack and Zöckler's *Kurzegefasster Kommentar*, B. *Neues Testament*, iv., Nördlingen 1888, pp. 3-43.—In respect both of introduction and of exposition, the author has confined himself within much too narrow limits. Occasionally even here, and more frequently in his treatment of some of the other epistles, he shows himself thoroughly capable of good work, but his *Ephesians* is disappointing and for the most part useless to the student. The meagre notes, sometimes through a whole page, do literally nothing more than refer to parallel passages more or less related to the text, and this in a manner in no wise superior to the margin of any good Reference Bible. It is not for a moment to be compared with the work of Von Soden.

9. Klöpffer, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, Göttingen 1891, pp. 201 (somewhat of a supplement to the author's elaborate Commentary on Colossians of 1882).—A treatise of first

importance in its discussion of questions of introduction, but somewhat meagre and perfunctory in the treatment of purely exegetical questions. Klöpfer regards the epistle as written by a Paulinist living not more than twenty or thirty years after the death of Paul. He thinks it was addressed by its author formally to the Ephesians, but intended for a wider circle of readers, who were troubled by the presence of teachers of Antinomian and libertine tendencies.

10. Beet, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon*, Lond. 1890 (*Ephesians*, pp. 271–389).—The exposition is thoroughly sensible and well-informed, but not particularly striking or suggestive. Questions of introduction are discussed in a somewhat fragmentary way, and the attempt to deal with all the epistles of the imprisonment together has prevented anything like a thorough treatment of each.

11. Beck, *Erklärung des Briefes Pauli an die Epheser*, Gütersloh 1891, pp. 244.—Useful exegetical notes, dominated in some instances by the author's peculiar doctrinal views, but specially useful in their presentation of the Pauline use of distinctive doctrinal terms. The earlier part of the exposition is much more full than the later. On the whole interesting, but not indispensable.

The best patristic commentaries are those of Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Jerome. Of modern critical works not mentioned above, we may name: Morus, *Explicatio Epistolæ Paulinæ ad Ephesios*, Lips. 1795, pp. 135–282,—good explanatory notes; and Matthies, *Erklärung des Briefes an die Epheser*, Greifswald 1834, pp. 187,—with interesting criticism of earlier commentators, but in exegesis vacillating and undependable.

III. DOCTRINAL COMMENTARIES, in which the critical and exegetical element is distinctly subordinated to the doctrinal interest, the text being made the basis for systematic doctrinal discussion:—

1. Boyd, *In Epistolam Pauli Apost. ad Ephesios Prælectiones*, Lond. 1652.—A posthumous work of Boyd of Trochrig, containing over two hundred lectures, delivered in Saumur,

Glasgow, and Edinburgh. Able, but extremely bulky, occupying twelve hundred and thirty-six large folio pages of double columns, of which, from the standpoint of a true commentary, probably a thousand pages are superfluous. The distribution and exegesis proper are thoroughly good, and have been largely drawn upon by later writers. The lectures are well described on the title-page as *lectione varia, multifaria eruditione et pietate singulari referta*, as giving an accurate analysis and a copious and clear explication of the apostle's words; appropriate observations on doctrines and practical application; besides all this, interspersing discussions on the *loci communes*, on questions and controversies, and explanations of a great number of Scripture texts. The excursus on *Predestination*, inserted after Eph. i. 13, 14, occupies about eighty-two of these large double-columned pages. It is, however, an admirable storehouse of good material.

2. Calvin, *Commentary on Ephesians* (original ed. Geneva, 1548), translated and published along with *Commentary on Galatians*, Edin. 1841.—This commentary possesses the well-known admirable qualities of its great author. It is an excellent specimen of the exegetico-doctrinal method. As all who have used Calvin's commentaries are aware, the great dogmatist is singularly fair in his exegesis, and free from the warping influence of doctrinal prejudice.

3. Rollock, *In Epistolam Pauli Apost. ad Ephesios*, Edin. 1590, 4to, pp. 290; Geneva 1593, 8vo, pp. 421.—Characterised by good sense, expressed in a plain and homely way. Rollock had preached over the epistle, and then wrote his commentary. His chief interest is in the doctrines, but these he conceives and expounds in a thoroughly practical and useful manner. Like Boyd, he has been largely drawn upon by subsequent expositors, and his work, so far as the student is concerned, is rather a curiosity than part of the necessary apparatus.

4. Zanchi, *Commentarius in Epistolam Sancti Pauli ad Ephesios*, 1st ed. 1594; ed. by Hartog, Amsterdam 1888, 2 vols., pp. 350, 415.—The work of one of the most able and accomplished theologians of the sixteenth century, constructed on purely scholastic lines, and affording a specimen of a

purely Calvinistic theological treatise, distributed so as to bear some resemblance to a commentary. Much useful material is to be found here, which, though quite out of place in a Commentary on Ephesians, would be welcome and appropriate in a work on systematic theology.

5. Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Lond. 1856.—This eminent theologian does not appear to advantage as a commentator. His work on Ephesians is not a particularly helpful book. The exegesis is everywhere subordinated to doctrinal statements, which scarcely deserve to be called exposition. The careful exegetical basis on which the doctrinal exposition should be immediately reared is wanting, and the notes often wear the appearance of having been bodily transferred from a theological common-place book.

6. Fergusson, *Brief Exposition of the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, Ephesians, etc.* (the original dated from Kilwinning, 1658), in the series of commentaries by David Dickson, George Hutcheson, and other Scottish divines.—In his distribution and exegesis he closely follows Boyd, but is more independent in the doctrinal notes which he appends to his comments on each verse. It is perhaps the very best doctrinal commentary on the epistle extant and ordinarily accessible. The doctrinal notes are very full, but are scrupulously confined to genuine deductions from the text, the meaning of which has been briefly but accurately stated in the exegetical paragraphs immediately following the text.

7. Bayne, *An Entire Commentary on the whole Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians* (originally published in complete form in 1643), Edin. 1866.—May be placed alongside of Fergusson's, as generally of the same order. It is, however, much more diffuse, and many things, especially in connection with the Arminian and Romish controversies, are needlessly dragged in, and dwelt upon in a tedious manner. Like Hodge, he is apt to forget the limits of his particular text, and to launch out into a general doctrinal dissertation.

IV. TREATISES ON BIBLICAL THEOLOGY, which discuss the peculiar type of apostolic doctrine set forth in Ephesians, as compared with other types of New Testament theology :—

1. Weiss, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols., Edin. 1888-89 (especially in vol. ii. pp. 75-124).—Nowhere is the doctrinal development of Paulinism more admirably set forth than in this work, in the sections that deal with Paul's early preaching, the teaching of the four great epistles, and the epistles of the imprisonment. In this third section, there is a very thorough and true presentation of the teaching of Ephesians on justification, fellowship with Christ, true wisdom and knowledge, the cosmical significance of Christ, the work of salvation in its cosmical relation, realisation of salvation in the Church, and Christianity as the principle of fellowship. This analysis of the doctrine of our epistle will be found most helpful, in enabling the student to realise the position reached and represented by the apostle in this highest stage of his spiritual development.

2. Köstlin, *Der Lehrbegriff des Evangeliums und der verwandten neutestamentlichen Lehrbegriffe*, Berlin 1843.—The work of a thorough-going adherent of the Tübingen school, in which the Epistle to the Ephesians is represented as the work of a mediator between Paul and John. The portion bearing on this subject (pp. 365-378) has been already summarised. The statement of the doctrinal system of the epistle is presented in a singularly clear and able manner, and is well worth the attention of every student of the types of doctrine presented in the various writings of the New Testament.

3. Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, 2 vols., Lond. 1887, original ed. Leipzig 1873, vol. ii. pp. 162-193, regards the Epistle to the Ephesians as an illustration of Paulinism in the course of its change to Catholicism. The analysis is able and suggestive, recognising the richness and highly-developed form of the dogma presented in the epistle. The discussion of the idea of the Church as here set forth is particularly instructive.

4. Sabatier, *The Apostle Paul*, appeared in its first edition some twenty years ago, translated from the third edition, 1891, a brilliant sketch, by a liberal French Protestant, of the life and doctrines of the apostle. The doctrinal develop-

ment of Paul is carefully studied in connection with the movements of his life and the unfolding of his personal experience. In Book iv., 213–249, we have *The Asiatic Epistles* discussed in a suggestive style. Our author rejects the Ephesian destination of the epistle, and regards it as intended for that group of churches, including Laodicea and Colossæ (Col. ii. 1), and identifies it with the epistle which the Colossians were to get from Laodicea (Col. iv. 16). It was not addressed to Laodicea, but to the circle of churches of which Laodicea was one. Sabatier firmly maintains the Pauline authorship of Ephesians and Colossians, and regards it as proved to demonstration that both are from the same author, and must stand or fall together.

5. Of a somewhat different order from those just named, but of interest mainly for their discussion of the types of doctrine which characterise the several groups of Paul's epistles, are the works of Davies and Irons.—DAVIES, *The Epistles of Paul to the Ephesians, the Colossians, and Philemon*, 2nd ed. Lond. 1884, undertakes to unfold the central thought of the apostle in those epistles, and to show that creaturely and human life have their centre and key in "the word which is the law and life of universal creation, and the Son who is the head of universal humanity." His notes are intentionally meagre, except on those passages which directly deal with these points. IRONS, *Christianity as taught by St. Paul*, Lond. 1870, seeks, especially in section 5, to work out a similar idea, but a special twist is given to his whole treatment of the subject by his endeavours to reduce the idea of election to a mere appointment to privilege, afforded first to Jews and then to Gentiles. In furtherance of this idea he, very elaborately but quite unsuccessfully, attempts to show that "we" and "ye," "saints" and "faithful," refer respectively to Jews and Gentiles.

V. PRACTICAL COMMENTARIES AND DISCOURSES:—

1. Graham (Dr. William, of Bonn), *Lectures on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, Lond. pp. 412.—These lectures are not characterised by any special brilliancy of style, but form the most thoroughly textual exposition, and the most edifying

spiritual commentary that we have met with. They afford an admirable specimen of what congregational lectures should be, presenting a careful exhibition of the exact meaning of each clause of the epistle, suitably followed by practical remarks and earnest appeals naturally deduced from and directly based upon the text.

2. Dale, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: Its Doctrine and Ethics*, Lond. 1882, pp. 446.—This course of lectures is disappointing. There is very evidently a want of proportion in the treatment of topics. In the second lecture (pp. 30–32), the author indulges in violent and vulgar abuse of Calvinism, which we have read often enough before in the productions of weak and angry controversialists, but which is quite unworthy of Dr. Dale's reputation as a thinker. He gives an absurdly unfair description, indeed, nothing but an overdone caricature of the doctrinal theory that excites his ire; while he refutes it by a strained and unsatisfactory, because one-sided, representation of the doctrine of Paul. He is specially successful in his treatment of the ethical part, to which it would have been well if he had given the whole of the space at his command. The style throughout is forcible, and the tone, upon the whole, bracing and healthy.

3. Stier, *Die Gemeinde in Christo; Auslegung des Epheserbriefs*, 2 vols., Berlin, 1848; or, in abridged form, *Der Brief an die Epheser als Lehre von der Gemeinde für die Gemeinde ausgelegt*, 1859.—Though in its large form most provokingly diffuse, this is a really helpful and profitable practical commentary. As in all his other works, so here, the author attempts to utilise, for purposes of edification, all possible meanings of each clause and expression, and because of his indecision is no real guide to exegesis, nor does he build on a trustworthy exegetical basis. His reflections, always good and pious, are not always appropriate and textual.

4. Pulsford, *Christ and His Seed, Central to all Things: being a Series of Expository Discourses on Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, Lond. 1872, 4to, pp. 248.—Very striking and original, full of rich, suggestive, spiritual thoughts; but unsystematic, and wanting in proportion in its treatment of the doctrines of the epistle. When consulted on particular

expressions, and for the unfolding of the great thoughts of the apostle, regarded as germinative ideas, apart from their setting in the epistle, the book will be found by many one of the richest and most stimulating of all the collections of practical discourses on texts from the Epistle to the Ephesians. In some cases he allows himself to drift into a dreamy mysticism.

5. Goodwin, *Exposition of Epistle to the Ephesians*, chaps. i. and ii. 1-11, original ed. 1681; Edin. 1861, vols. i. and ii. of Works of Goodwin, with Discourses on other parts of the Epistle.—As Goodwin devotes a volume of five hundred and sixty-four pages to one chapter, it will be readily understood that he says much that has no proper connection with his text. He takes advantage of every word or phrase to launch forth into a detailed analysis of all doctrines presented, or even remotely hinted at, by the term in question, and into an examination, often pointless enough and commonplace, of an endless array of Scripture passages where similar language happens to be used. If one has time and patience to peruse fifty pages, for what he ought to have had in five, he will find a solid and substantial exposition, the fruit of deep experimental acquaintance with the doctrines of grace as set forth in the epistle.

COMMENTARY.



A.—THEOLOGICAL DIVISION.—CHAPS. I.—III.

THE Epistle to the Ephesians, like most of the epistles of Paul, falls into two portions, which are respectively of a predominantly theoretical and of a predominantly practical character. The entire composition, however, as must ever be the case in genuinely epistolary productions, is throughout intensely practical, and so, even in the distinctly doctrinal parts, there are found unmistakeable traces of a directly hortatory intention. We prefer to indicate the distinguishing characteristics of the two portions of our epistle by the designations *Theological* and *Ethical*. Yet, even when using these distinctive names, we must remember that the differentiation is not by any means thoroughgoing. Christian ethics is closely related to Christian dogmatics, so that even in scientific treatises the province of the one cannot be sharply and definitely marked off from that of the other. We cannot treat any section of Christian doctrine without admitting a very decided flavour of the ethical element; and we cannot treat any department of Christian morals without indicating distinctly, not only the doctrines but also the theoretical view of the doctrines on which the principles of true Christian conduct are based. Hence all modern writers on theological encyclopædia are inclined to consider dogmatics and ethics as departments of systematic theology dealing with the contents of religion, viewed in the one case primarily as a system of beliefs, and in the other primarily as affording the principles of conduct for the life. But the faith set forth in Christian dogmatics is living faith, which takes its form and character largely from the experience of its power in actual life; and the principles of conduct laid down in Christian ethics are principles accepted and acted upon by believers,

whose faith determines their whole view of life. In this epistle, as in all his epistles, the apostle never loses sight of either of the elements which go to make up a genuinely religious view of man in his relation to God and his fellow-men, and in his relation to time and eternity. We distinguish the first three chapters as *Theological*, because this is the writer's point of view throughout; and his treatment of his theme is worthy of that name just because the ethical interest is never absent. We distinguish the last three chapters as *Ethical*, because this indicates the writer's point of view in this part of his work; and his treatment of his subject here is worthy of that name just because the theological interest is never absent.

SECT. I.—ADDRESS AND GREETING (Chap. i. 1, 2).

Ver. 1. *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ*.—So Paul styles himself in the opening verses of most of his epistles. The title owes its origin to Christ. It is not to be regarded as the equivalent for any synagogal office. The apostles of Christ were twelve men selected from among His disciples, subjected to a special course of teaching preparatory to their entering upon their great mission, and then at last formally commissioned by the Master, whose disciples they were, to disciple all nations. In the synoptic Gospels the word is used only to designate the Twelve. As it was their privilege to be "with Him," so the functions of their office are similar to His own, and can be characterised by a common name. As He is, so are they in the world. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls Christ the *Apostle* and High Priest of our calling (iii. 1). Our Lord Himself often repeats the declaration that He is the *Sent of God*; and then, of His disciples chosen to be apostles He says: "As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John xvii. 18).—Paul is an apostle in this most honourable sense.¹ He continues Christ's work in the world,

¹ For a thorough and comprehensive examination of the Scripture use of the term "apostle," see Lightfoot, *Epistle to the Galatians*, pp. 92-101, 10th ed. 1890.

during the period of the founding and forming of the Church. We cannot wonder at his evident fondness for the designation.

By the will of God.—He now proceeds to show that he has good authority for so styling himself. He is an apostle by the will of God. He taketh not this honour to himself, but is called of God. Thus, in the original ground of their calling, agree Aaron, Christ, and Paul. Although not individually included in the above-quoted commission of the Lord, Paul can yet point to unmistakeable proofs of an express divine call to the apostleship. He thinks of the entire course of God's dealings with him, from his mother's womb (Gal. i. 15) to the shining from heaven of the great light (Acts ix. 3), and the bestowal upon him of that grace which the chief apostles recognised in him as qualifying him for the apostleship of the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 9). He does not, however, require to defend his apostolic rank among the Ephesians, as he had been obliged to do among the Galatians. He therefore does not linger over the evidences of his call to be an apostle, but rather, in view of his former position as a persecutor, he calls to remembrance, with thankfulness, the exceeding grace of God in thus entrusting him with the ministry. The churches of Christ have seen and known his manner of life, so as to be able to trace in his career manifest proofs that it was directed by and in accordance with the will of God. That he is indeed an apostle by the will of God, gives ground of confidence to his readers, that what he writes is in accordance with the will of God, and embraces the whole counsel of God (Rom. i. 10, 11, xv. 29–32). Moreover, absolute dependence upon the will of God was characteristic of Paul in regard to all the details of his personal, as well as of his official, life. Only in so far as one consciously subjects himself to God's will can he be God's apostle. In this lay the secret of Paul's strength. He does not falter in presence of difficulties and dangers, because he does not then think of himself at all, either as weak or as strong, but only of that supreme will which he obeys,—the one absolutely strong thing in the universe. Paul does not falter, because this will, with which alone he concerns himself,

knows no variableness, and is not in the least affected by circumstances. He thus finds that when *he* is weak, that is, when self is least obtrusive, then is he strong, being most entirely at the bidding of the divine will.

To the saints which are at Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus.—The designation of those addressed follows immediately upon the designation of the writer, in accordance with the usual epistolary style of those times.—The terms “saints” and “faithful,” or believing, designate the same parties. There is no substantial ground for understanding by the one term Jewish and by the other Gentile Christians, as is done, for example, by Irons in his *Christianity as Taught by St. Paul*. Von Soden is driven by the exigencies of his text, from which he excludes the local designation, to insist upon this distinction. He represents the apostle as claiming for the believers in Christ the right to that designation which the Jews had regarded as exclusively their own.¹ But while the saints and the believers were the same persons, the employment of the different terms implied that they were regarded from two different points of view. The term “saint” indicates the ecclesiastical standing; the term “faithful” the spiritual character or attitude of those addressed by the apostle. They are saints by the divine election, and so it is said that they are called to be saints (1 Cor. i. 1); God’s electing love has separated them unto Himself by the consecration of a special choice. They are believers by the exercise, under gracious divine influence, of their own spiritual powers, in the appropriation of Him who has been sent to reconcile them to God. And then the apostle, in accordance with his doctrine, speaks of them first of all as saints, objects of the divine electing love, and in the next place as believers, exercising God’s gift of faith in receiving His Son.

Paul generally addresses the members of the churches to which he writes as *Saints*. The only exceptions are found in the earlier epistles, those to the Thessalonians and Galatians,

¹ Von Soden, *Hand-Commentar*, iii. 1, p. 101: “Inasmuch as the aim of the epistle is to secure recognition for the fact that all Christians, whether of Jewish or of Gentile descent, stand precisely in the same position, the address serves as programme. According to it, there are no ἁγιοί in the technical sense, for they are all equally πιστοί, and all who are πιστοί belong to the ἁγιοί.”

where the writer addresses the churches, which, however, are simply the congregations of the saints. It was the oldest name by which Christians were known. Before they had been called Christians at Antioch, they were called saints (Acts ix. 13, 32); and this name was used interchangeably with the designation "disciples of the Lord" (Acts ix. 1, 19), which corresponds precisely with the term "believers."—The idea conveyed by the term "saint" is that of separation in order to consecration. Even in the Old Testament, local separation from impurity had a distinct ideal reference to moral and spiritual withdrawal from evil. God's people, altar, temple, priests, etc., were holy because claimed by Him and separated to Himself. They did not make themselves, nor were they made by others, holy, but were made holy by God. Holiness properly belongs only to God. What, therefore, He separates from other relations, in order to call it into relation with Himself, He brings into connection with holiness; and if it possesses moral and spiritual capacities it becomes holy in heart and life. Things—God's temple, altar, day, etc.—become ceremonially holy; individuals—God's priests and people—are destined, in the divine idea, to become personally holy. The object, too, that was separated unto God and devoted, had to be without blemish and perfect of its kind. Ceremonial purity had significance only as preparing the way and educating man's nature for real personal purity. The ideal was presented in the New Testament, freed from all entanglement with the ceremonial, so that it might be directly realised in the individual life and in the life of the community. Sainthood, as characterising the membership of the Christian Church, not only involves, but explicitly postulates, on the part of all, inner purity and likeness to God. The term "saints," viewed in its historical use, means simply God's people, those whom God has separated to Himself, the congregation of God's Israel. It thus indicates a particular visible community, and carries with it a literal suggestion of the idea of locality. This term is therefore peculiarly fitted to designate the membership of a particular Christian congregation. In other epistles of Paul, it is closely attached to the local designation of the church addressed. "All that are in Rome, called to be

saints" (Rom. i. 7), "the church at Corinth, those that are called to be saints" (1 Cor. i. 2), "the saints which are in all Achaia" (2 Cor. i. 1), "saints at Philippi" (Phil. i. 1), "saints, etc., at Colossæ" (Col. i. 2). Such examples as these afford a strong presumption in favour of the presence of some local designation, such as "*in Ephesus*," in immediate connection with the word "saints." They are, then, as members of the church at Ephesus, already dedicated or devoted to God, and so destined to holiness.

The saint's ideal, however, is attainable only through appropriation by faith of the Holy One. And so the apostle proceeds to describe those addressed as saints who are exercising faith in Christ, who are in living contact with the source of all saintliness,—*the faithful in Christ Jesus*. By this phrase the apostle means "believers," those who have and who exercise faith. The result of faith's possession and use undoubtedly is steadfastness. Those who believe, and continue believing, exhibit thus the grace of fidelity. In the absence, however, of any occasion for polemical reference, the idea of steadfastness is not here made prominent. When the apostle next refers to the graces of the Ephesians (ver. 15), he at once speaks of their faith in the Lord Jesus.—The term is added in this place, in order more exactly to define and characterise those addressed. They are not here spoken of as saints in Christ Jesus, but as saints who are believers in Jesus, as those whose outward profession and inward condition correspond. It is quite in keeping with the definition of "saints" and "believers" given above, that the former term should be immediately connected with the local designation, "*in Ephesus*;" and that the latter term should be connected with the moral and spiritual designation, "*in Christ Jesus*." Called to be saints, they are joined in an outward association and constitute a community; but when described as believers, it is a subjective spiritual character that is pointed to, which can be wrought in them only by contact with the person of Jesus Christ. They are not, therefore, here characterised as saints in Christ Jesus, but as believers in Him. True Christian holiness is reached only where the two are combined: separated unto God in election, united to Christ by faith. It

is undoubtedly true that those who believe in Christ are also saints in Christ. At the same time it is evident that the "in" has quite a different signification in the one case and in the other. Saintliness consists in communion with Christ Jesus. To be in Christ Jesus is to be saintly. But the rank of saints, as intended here, is reached by an external profession, which if genuine implies belief in Him to whom we profess devotion. Bishop Pearson argues that just as St. Matthew calls Jerusalem the "*Holy City*," at the very time when the mass of its inhabitants were rejecting the Saviour's gracious invitation, so the catholic Church, while containing many void of saving grace, deserves to be called holy. In this sense "saints" is the designation of professed members of the Church, and "believers in Christ Jesus" are those in the visible Church in whom Christ's loving purpose (Eph. v. 25-27) is being accomplished. Personal trust in Christ, and professed adherence to His cause, ought always to go together.

Ver. 2. *Grace to you, and peace.*—The benediction here given answers to the salutation which Jesus enjoined His apostles to give to those among whom they went (Matt. x. 12, 13). This same greeting occurs in all Paul's epistles, varied only in the Pastoral Epistles, where the circumstance of their being addressed to individuals suggests the addition of the more tender and personal phrase "mercy." Hence it will not do to insist upon making "grace" bear a special reference to "saints," and "peace" a special reference to "the faithful in Christ Jesus." These two terms, grace and peace, occur in greetings where the designations, saints and faithful, are not employed. Nor is there any sufficient ground for associating grace exclusively, or even distinctively, with God the Father, and peace similarly with God the Son. The wish that peace may be enjoyed by the Ephesian Christians, seems rather to define the character of the grace sought. It is grace that produces peace in those unto whom it comes. In the idea of grace, there is, indeed, an unmistakeable reference to what is primary, and in that of peace to what is secondary; and we are therefore here led to think, on the one hand, of God's electing grace, and, on the other, of that believing which brings

peace. But, as we shall see, this election is in Christ, and in Him also we have peace.

From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.—The apostle has placed God and Christ upon the same level. They are regarded as the common source of the gifts of grace and peace. They are not distinguished in respect of the gifts which they bestow. Both give grace and peace. But they are distinguished in their relation to the recipients of those gifts. God and Christ are thus distinguished by names indicating their respective relations to the members of the Church. God is Father to those who, as saints, are “predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ” (ver. 5), and who, as believers, can call Jesus Christ their Lord, who call Him so, by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. xii. 3). With respect to such as are saints and faithful in reality as well as in name, the apostolic wish reaches to the full height of a comforting assurance of those in possession of those divine gifts.—Christ is Lord, as having received from the Father all power in heaven and in earth (Matt. xxviii. 18), and being made Head over all to the Church (Eph. i. 22); and this is recognised by all the saints and faithful, who, as such, acknowledge His authority.

Goodwin in his works (i. 21) discusses, in an interesting manner, the question, why the Holy Ghost is not mentioned along with the Father and the Son in the apostolic greetings. The answer is, that it is the Spirit’s office to reveal and communicate the grace and peace of Father and Son; that, while these two divine persons are objects of faith, the Spirit is the *Author* of this faith. So, too, prayer is addressed to Father and Son, but rather by the Spirit than to Him (Rom. viii. 26). The apostle’s greeting here is just such a prayer.

SECT. II.—THE OPERATIONS OF DIVINE GRACE:

What the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have done for the Church (chap. i. 3–14).

The apostle blesses God for the blessings wherewith he has blessed the Church. Those blessings are enumerated in detail in this paragraph, to the praise of God. They are very

evidently arranged according as they are more immediately brought to us by God the Father (vers. 3-6), by God the Son (vers. 7-12), and by God the Holy Spirit (vers. 13, 14). Each of those sections ends with a declaration that what has been uttered redounds to the praise of God's glory. Whatever is affirmed of one Person of the Trinity implies necessarily the co-operation of the other divine Persons. By way of eminence, however, the counsels of eternity are associated with the name of the Father, the accomplishment of redemption in the fulness of time with the name of the Son, and the building up of the Christian life and character with the name of the Holy Spirit. This is the true scriptural method of the doctrine of the Trinity. No encouragement is given to either of the contrasted theories of Tritheism or Sabellianism. The tri-personality of God appears in the distinctness of the three operations in man's salvation; the unity of the divine nature is seen in this, that redemption, in its conception, execution, and completion, has for its highest end the praise of God's glory.

(1) *What the Father has done* (vers. 3-6).

Ver. 3. *Blessed be God*.—The Apostle Peter opens his first epistle with an identical ascription of praise to God. The creature can bless the Creator only by praising Him. This he must do by deed or by word. God's blessedness consists in what He is and in what He does. The creature cannot interfere with this, either for its increase or diminishing. But he may increase his own spiritual wealth by expressing his hearty acquiescence in God's blessedness. It is characteristic of the "saints," then, to bless God (Ps. cxlv. 10). One of the divine names is "The Blessed" (Mark xiv. 61). Largely used in rabbinical writings, it designates God not merely as the Being who is in possession of all blessedness, but more particularly as the Holy One who inhabits the praises of Israel (Ps. xxii. 3). God is in Himself blessed for evermore, and to this His saints respond with the devout "amen" (Rom. ix. 5). The apostle rejoices in the privilege. To be permitted thus to bless God is itself one of the highest spiritual blessings wherewith God blesses His people.

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—We have here the designation under which God is addressed by man as he draws near to call Him blessed. He is not to be approached by man in any other name. It is only with God in Christ that we can speak,—with Christ, and then with God as His God and Father, revealed to us as such in Him. God and Father indicates a dual relationship, in which the first Person of the Trinity stands to the second Person become incarnate. He is to Him at once God and Father. There can be no dispute as to the general sense of the passage. It is God in Christ whom we bless. The question, however, has been much discussed as to whether the words, “of our Lord Jesus Christ,” are to be connected with “the God and Father” or with “Father” only. Luther had translated, “God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Harless vindicates this translation, understanding the apostle here first of all, in the most general way, to bless God, and then specially to bless Him as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Procurer of His saving gifts to us. He argues that the absence of the particle *τέ* before *καί* renders the attachment of the genitival phrase to God as well as to the Father impossible. It has, however, been admitted by Meyer and Ellicott, who favour Harless’ rendering, that even without the *τέ* the other translation would be quite grammatical. Meyer insists that the genitive “of our Lord Jesus Christ” can only be connected with “Father,” because “God and Father” (*ὁ Θεὸς καὶ πατήρ*) had become a stated and recognised designation of God. In support of this, he refers to Eph. v. 20 and 1 Cor. xv. 24. In the passage from Corinthians, the apostle is speaking of the end of the present dispensation, when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to His God and Father. It is an act of Christ that is referred to, and in this He acts towards God in accordance with His relations to Him. His mediatorial service has reached its consummation, His work as the Incarnate Son is accomplished, and so it is most suitable to God, as His God and Father, that He delivers up His delegated power. Then again, in Eph. v. 20, as our exegesis of that passage shows, we have thanks offered in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to the God and Father, *i.e.* to the God

and Father of Christ. In this place clearly we cannot explain why thanks are to be given in the name of Christ to God and the Father, except on the assumption that thanks so rendered are acceptable to Him because He is the God and Father of Christ. Hence both of these passages are found, upon a fair interpretation, to support the rendering given to our passage in the English version. The designation of the Father as also the God of our Lord Jesus Christ introduces no doctrinal novelty. In ver. 17 of this chapter, the apostle addresses his prayer to "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is a relationship that had its beginning with the Incarnation. The relation of Father and Son was from eternity. The Man Christ Jesus recognises in the Father also His God. Yet it is not in respect of His divinity alone that God is His Father: the God-man goes about His Father's business (Luke ii. 49). And it is not in respect of His humanity alone that the Father is now His God: it is the Son who cries upon the cross to His God, and enters the eternal world by ascending to His Father and His God (John xx. 17). His equipment as Mediator required that, as the God-man, He should at once be God's Son and subject to God's law. This is the position to which man needs to be restored. He must get this from Christ; and Christ can give men only what He Himself first has as His own. The right to call God our God and Father can come to us only from One who Himself stands to God in this relation. This sentence also forms a natural transition from the resolve to bless God, to the enumeration and characterisation of the blessings wherewith He has blessed us. That He is God and Father to our Lord Jesus Christ constitutes the deepest grounds for our praise. His becoming God and Father to Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to have Jesus Christ as our Lord.

Who hath blessed us.—These words set before us the motive by which saints are constrained to bless God. Observe how carefully the apostle avoids the extremes of human speculation. Scripture allows no advantage either to materialistic modes of thought or to morbid and false spiritualistic tendencies. "We cannot love One whom we have never

seen," says the materialist; "nor, indeed, can we form any reasonable conception of such an unseen Being," says the agnostic. "Whom having not seen ye love," fearlessly declares our apostle, animated by the hope, through faith, of yet seeing Him who is now unseen. "It is unworthy of God," says the mystic spiritualist, "to speak of loving God only after we have been assured of God's love to us; let our love be disinterested; love Him for love's sake, for His own sake."¹ And yet the very apostle of love himself is content to claim for the Christian's love an origin in the love of God revealed to us. Similarly the apostle here calls upon us to bless God because He has blessed us. There can, indeed, be no other order of succession than this. God's deed of blessing must necessarily precede man's sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise. Man's blessing of God is the echo sent back from the heart in which the God that blesses has spoken. God's blessing in the soul, which is nothing else than that soul's redemption, must needs continue ever present to the mind and heart of the saint. He has no wish to put away the remembrance of it. The soul which says "Bless God," is already overflowing with memories of God's blessing. And again, as all blessedness dwells in God and so all power to bless is only in Him, we cannot know what blessedness is, and so cannot intelligently acquiesce in God's blessedness, unless He has already shown it to us by blessing us. If, then, we are to be able to say, "Blessed be God," we must also be able to say, "God hath blessed us;" God's blessing is with us a present experience, a present enjoyment. The aorist here used makes the reference definite. The apostle is thinking of that particular blessing which lies in Christ: the blessing of redemption. He has blessed us by calling us in His electing love to be saints, and we know that we have this blessing if we can call Jesus Christ Lord.

The three clauses that follow describe and characterise the

¹ This extreme doctrine was expressly taught by the Quietists. In Fénelon's work, *Maximes des Saints*, Paris 1697, Madame Guyon's doctrines were vindicated, and it was affirmed that to love God we must love Him purely for His own sake, apart altogether from any consideration of the blessedness which we obtain from Him.

blessings wherewith God has blessed us. Each of the three is linked on to the preceding clause by the same preposition, and are independent of one another. They describe God's blessings to us (1) according to the agency by which they are wrought or produced, and from which they obtain their distinctive character—they are, all of them in all their variety, blessings of the Spirit; (2) according to the sphere or atmosphere in which they operate, and where they find a genial surrounding,—they are possessed and enjoyed in heavenly places; and (3) according to the procuring or meritorious cause and the personal fount out of which they flow,—they all come to us and can come to us only in Christ.

With every blessing of the Spirit.—This phrase indicates directly the agency by which the blessing is produced, and, by consequence, the character of the blessing. The immediate attention of the apostle is not to affirm the truth that those blessings affect the spiritual part of men's nature. They do this, but are not to be exclusively restricted in that way. "We must not," says Pulsford, "make our inheritance to be more spiritual than shall correspond with the glorified body of our Lord. The spirituality which drops the idea of our true humanity is to be resisted and abhorred. Christ is the restorer and glorifier of our whole nature." The body is not overlooked in the redemption, and whatever capacities the redeemed body may have, these undoubtedly will have their suitable blessings. But whether for the body or for the spirit of the redeemed man, these blessings will all be blessings of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit directly operates, and the blessing experienced is His work.—These blessings being God's, both in design and in execution, are given without reserve. Every kind of blessing belonging to the Spirit, and within His range of operation, is in the heritage of the saints. God has blessed us by giving us a right to every blessing of the Spirit. And every such blessing of the Spirit is spiritual, and as such can be appreciated and appropriated only by the spiritually minded. In a very real sense they are spiritually discerned.

In heavenly places.—This phrase occurs five times in this epistle (i. 3, 20, ii. 6, iii. 10, vi. 12). It indicates the sphere in which the blessings are enjoyed. "In the

heavenlies" ¹ is the exact rendering, but clearly "places" and not "things" must be supplied. It is dependent on the clause "hath blessed us," and not, as Harless, Ellicott, and Meyer maintain, on the clause "every blessing of the Spirit." We have here a second defining clause, collateral with that which immediately preceded. That blessing of the God and Father of Christ, which is wrought in us and made a real blessing to us by the operation of the Spirit, is enjoyed in the heavenly places. The sphere in which the blessing is possessed and enjoyed, is in precise and perfect keeping with the blessing itself. The blessing is spiritual, and the world of its birth, development, and consummation is spiritual. It has its place from first to last in the heavens, among things enduring and eternal. In the heavenly places those whom the God and Father of Christ have blessed by His eternal heavenly choice will find their ideal residence. The Father's house is the children's home. In that region the Spirit works, and His presence working in us and upon us makes the scene of our lives heavenly. The possession and enjoyment of every blessing of the Spirit constitutes heaven. Fitness for this heaven, meetness for continued residence there, is that blessing wherewith the God and Father of Christ has blessed us. In proportion as the blessing accepted by us corresponds to "every blessing of the Spirit" offered to us, will the atmosphere in which we live and breathe become heavenly. For us this heaven is at first a state—simply the reflection of our own heavenliness of soul; at last, it will be realised as a place, where condition and locality perfectly correspond. Meanwhile, we have days of heaven upon earth, in proportion as our conversation, our way of life, is in heaven.

In Christ.—Here we have a third defining clause. It indicates the personal fount of all the blessings of God. Our blessings are from the God and Father of Christ. He has made His own fulness to dwell in Christ, and this blessing we enjoy only as we draw it from Christ. The spiritual life of the saint, which is made up of all blessings of the Spirit, and

¹ Ἐν τοῖς ἰπουρανίοις. See a striking sermon based on those five texts in Candlish's *Epistle to the Ephesians*, pp. 1-17.

which is lived out in the heavenly places, has its germ of vitality in the life of Christ. The apostle does not here say "through Christ," but "in Christ." He does not say Christ Jesus, but simply Christ. It is not Christ's work of redemption which he emphasises, but union with Him as originating the new life. In Christ we have Christ's God and Father as ours. Thus God blesses us by choosing us in eternity in Christ, and so securing to us the right to share in His inheritance.

The blessings which thus call forth the thanksgiving of the saints, correspond to the character of those who bless God. Just as worldly men—lovers of money, of pleasure, of books—appreciate and feel thankful for gifts that increase the stock of things prized by them; so also those who have the Spirit of Christ value supremely and bless God for the blessings of the Spirit. These blessings also correspond to the nature and character of the God who bestowed them. The gifts of God who is a Spirit to His children are spiritual blessings.

Ver. 4. *According as He hath chosen us in Him.*—The apostle thus continues his description of the spiritual blessings bestowed by the Father. From the general statement of the facts that these blessings are spiritual, and have their source in Christ, he proceeds to enumerate them in order, beginning here with the primary and fundamental blessing—God's gracious election of us in Christ. It should be carefully noted, that the apostle here expressly assigns the origin of all spiritual blessings that come to the saints to their election of God; and that he regards the saints, "*us*," as the direct object of His divine choice. It is not said of God, "He hath chosen Christ, and us in Him;" but He hath chosen us to receive blessing in Christ. The views so passionately and scornfully rejected by Dale are not only those of the Westminster Confession, but also of Paul in his epistle. The Calvinistic doctrine is simply Pauline, that those predestinated to life are chosen by God's mere free grace in Christ without any foresight of faith. The fact emphasised is, that He has chosen us, and that our being in Christ has resulted from that divine act of will. If our election again depended upon any condition of faith on our

part, the apostle would not have said that God blesses us by choosing us in Christ to the enjoyment of spiritual blessing ; but rather that He chose us, because He found us already in possession of such blessings. We are not chosen because of, but unto, faith in Christ.—This doctrine, it should be observed, is proclaimed to those who are already saints and faithful. To the anxious inquirer Paul speaks not of it, but simply says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Those who are holy and beloved of God (Col. iii. 12) are exhorted, as the elect of God, to walk worthy of their calling. So Paul speaks to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. i. 3, 4) of their election, only after he had observed their work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope. To such he says, “Your faith proves your election, and it is for your encouragement to know that the exercise of your faith is in strict accordance with the eternal counsels of God. True, faith is not your own, and your believing selves are not your own. Your faith is God’s gift, and your new selves are God’s work, and what is God’s must like Himself have an eternal source.”—The choice here spoken of is a choice of persons, a choosing out of the mass of mankind. The chief Scripture source of this great doctrine is the record of our Saviour’s words, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you” (John xv. 16). This forms a strict parallel to the words of Paul. The ground or sphere of this election is in Him, *i.e.* in Christ. He is the elect of God (Isa. xiii. 6), and those who are chosen from among men are reckoned in Him and share His favour with God. The choice is still the Father’s, for the passage quoted which seems to attribute the choice to the Son must be read in connection with John xvii. 2, 6, 9, 11, 24. He chooses in time only those who had been chosen of the Father in eternity. We recognise Christ as our spiritual head, as Adam was our natural head. This federal union between Christ and His members is viewed by the apostle as subsisting from eternity.

Before the foundation of the world.—This is a phrase nowhere else used by Paul, but the idea conveyed is a commonplace in his epistles. The nearest verbal parallel will be found in 2 Tim. i. 9, “before the world began.” Outside of

Paul's writings the phrase occurs twice (John xvii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 20); in the one case with reference to the Father's eternal love of the Son, and in the other with reference to God's eternal foreordination of Christ as our Redeemer. "Before Abraham was I am," says Christ; and, says the apostle, "God hath chosen us in Him." We may therefore understand "before the foundation of the world" as explanatory of that "in Him."—Let us observe here how quietly the apostle has set forth the truth in opposition to Ephesian superstition. The image of Diana worshipped in Ephesus was an unsightly monstrosity, swollen and many-breasted, to symbolise, in oriental fashion, the rich and lavish abundance of nature. Diana was thus a nature goddess. Her worship was simple naturalism. The creature was worshipped and served rather than the Creator. In opposition to all this heathen pantheism, which recognised no personal God, Paul preached a God who exercised His eternal will before that world which man thought eternal had its foundations laid. God had in eternity the plan of the world, which He realised in time when He laid the foundations of the earth. God had also in eternity the plan of man's salvation in Christ, which He realises in time when in the day of grace He visits any soul and blesses him with blessings of the Spirit in Christ.

That we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love.—It has been much disputed whether these words, "in love," should be included in this clause or joined to the clause immediately following. But we shall see that the predestination of the fifth verse has its direct object in the adoption, rather than in the persons adopted, whereas the election of the fourth verse refers immediately to the persons chosen. It is surely much more natural to refer the expression "in love" to the term that is directly applied to persons, seeing that it can only be regarded as the expression of the divine disposition toward self-conscious beings. We therefore unhesitatingly join the words "in love" with the phrase "He hath chosen us." The objection to this interpretation, that the phrases so connected are too far apart from one another, has no weight.¹

¹ Most modern commentators, including Harless, Meyer, Stier, Hofmann, and Ellicott, have argued in favour of connecting the phrase with the opening clause

Many expositors have preferred to take the words "in love" as indicating the moral sphere in which the holy and blameless life moves. God has chosen us to a life of love, which shows itself in holiness and freedom from blemish. This is the interpretation adopted in the practical commentaries of Bayne, Fergusson, and Goodwin, in the expositions of Erasmus, Luther, and Calvin, and, among modern commentators, by Wordsworth and Alford. The objection to this view, which seems to me exclusive, is that in the sixth verse, at the close of this division of the paragraph, the Son of God is named "the Beloved," *ἡγαπημένος*. It is more natural, surely, to understand the *ἐν ἀγάπῃ* of the fourth verse of the love of God, as in the sixth verse, rather than of the love of the saints. The whole passage is occupied with the declaration of the love of God the Father to man; and if a reference to the love wrought by grace in the saints were introduced, the transition would certainly be very deliberately marked.—God's purpose in our election is twofold,—His own glory and our holiness. The former is explicitly stated in the sixth verse; the latter, in the clause before us. He would have us "holy and without blemish." The word *ἄμωμος* is wrongly rendered here, and in Col. i 22, "without blame;" and correctly in Eph. v. 27; Heb. ix. 14; Jude 24, and Rev. xiv., "without blemish, spot, fault." It is the technical word to describe a sacrificial victim that had passed the ordeal and had been pronounced fit to be offered.¹ It points to the outward manifestation of that which, as an inward principle, is holiness.—The reference here is to our sanctification, not to our justification. Meyer and Harless interpret it as referring to the believers standing in justification; but Ellicott and Hodge, as well as the older commentators already referred to, rightly refer it to the believer's state and sanctification. So in 2 Thess. ii. 13, the apostle thanks God for having from the beginning chosen the believers of Thessalonica to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit. It is also in accordance

of the fifth verse. Alford has given what seems to me a conclusive answer to their arguments. Wordsworth says: "*Ἐν ἀγάπῃ* seems to express a necessary fruit of our incorporation and indwelling *ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ* (ver. 6)."

¹ Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, 10th ed., p. 380, Lond. 1886.

with the New Testament usage, to regard the sanctification rather than the justification of the Christian as the end of God's calling and choice. Nor is the phrase "before Him" any less appropriate in connection with sanctifying than with justifying grace. The Ephesians to whom Paul wrote were saints, called to be saints. Their sainthood is meanwhile imperfect, but their title is complete,—it extends to every blessing of the Spirit. Holiness is their destination, and what they are not yet, in so far as it pertains to holiness, they shall be hereafter. Holiness is defined as faultlessness. "Before Him," who looks not on the outward appearance, these attributes in the elect ideally correspond, and His love will perfect holiness in the chosen.—That the election spoken of here is not election to privileges merely, but to life and holiness, ought to be evident to every unprejudiced reader. In this verse and the following the apostle quite distinctly declares that believers have been chosen, not to opportunities of grace, but to the enjoyment of grace. The election, as Mozley says (*Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*, 3rd ed., p. 351, 1883), "is not to the power but to the fact of holiness." The elect are chosen, not to the possibility, but to the realisation of holiness.

Ver. 5. *Having predestinated us to adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself*.—All the verbs used throughout this paragraph to describe the course of God's love in His dealings with us, are of the same tense. We have the three aorists—He blessed, chose, predestinated. Thus priority is not given to any one of those eternal operations of the divine will. Indeed, all time relations are manifestly inappropriate here, and we cannot speak of them as either successive or synchronous. The participial form of the phrase, "having predestinated" (*προορίσας*) shows that predestination is included along with election as a blessing of the Spirit, not that predestination is regarded as prior to election even in the order of thought. Predestination is the plan, and election is the means used for its accomplishment. In order that the plan may be carried out, there must be persons upon whom it may operate. But both the plan and the choosing are put upon the same eternal plane as purposed to be carried out in Christ Jesus. Sometimes it has been attempted too sharply to distinguish those two

eternal acts of God. The distinction suggested and supported by the passage before us, is that which views predestination as the ordaining of privilege for us in the adoption of sons, and election as the choice of our persons from among many for the enjoyment of that privilege. When thus considered, we see the appropriateness of making holiness the end of election, and adoption the end of predestination. Election provides the persons, and sees to their fitness for the enjoyment of the privilege. The provision is made and the fitness secured by our election *in Christ*. To be chosen in Christ is to be chosen unto holiness. Life in Christ, the mere being in Him, implies holiness; as the members of His body, we must be like Him, must be of like kind with Himself. But the privilege and its enjoyment mean something over and above mere existence. Adoption implies the holiness of the adopted, but also their exaltation to special glory and honour. As Goodwin says: "Things must be purposed to have a being ere they can be supposed to have a well being in Christ. . . . Now, election is that which first gives you a being in Christ, and then God, by the act of predestination, did appoint you a well being through Him."¹ This well being of those who have their being in Christ, is described by the apostle as "the adoption of sons" (*υἱοθεσία*). This expression has a very wide meaning. It describes at once a forensic act and a spiritual condition. But this distinction is not brought into prominence here. The one theme enlarged upon is the love of God the Father in thinking upon us and devising means for our salvation in the counsels of eternity. The adoption, therefore, means the divine grace of receiving us into the filial relationship, not the spirit of sons wrought in us. For what the apostle is directly thinking of here is the rank and consequent distinction conferred in adoption, which we owe to the God and Father of Christ who has thus blessed us in Him. —It has been pointed out by Merivale, in his *Conversion of the Roman Empire*, that the use of this figure to represent the believer's relation to God is borrowed from the Roman law, and implies, on the part of the writer, a knowledge of the principles and terminology of Roman jurisprudence. It was quite

¹ Goodwin, *Works*, vol. i. p. 85.

unknown among the Jews. The legal process among the Romans secured for the adopted child a right to the name and property of him who adopted him, and also endowed the adopter with all the rights and privileges of a father.—In subordination to the grand end of the divine glory, to which, indeed, it is a main contributor, the glorifying of the saints, of those chosen unto holiness, by securing to them the adoption of children, is the highest aim of the divine redemption. It is the final result contemplated by the incarnation (Gal. iv. 5); it is realised in the redemption of our body (Rom. viii. 23); and the Spirit of adoption causes us to address God as Father (Rom. viii. 15). Sonship, conceived of by John as a spiritual relationship entered upon by a spiritual birth (1 John iii. 1), and by Paul as secured by adoption, is the highest possible expression of God's love to us, and is therefore used to describe the final perfection which we wait for (Rom. viii. 33). —We are adopted “to Himself,” that is, to God the Father, to Him whose sons we become; and this is accomplished “through Jesus Christ,” by means of His mediation. Having by grace united us to His own Son, He now glorifies us by raising us together with Him. Through Christ we are brought into the family of God. He alone was the Son of God, and only through Him can any others gain the rank of sons. It is the gaining of this rank and not the rank itself, the adoption as an act of God's grace and not as the blessed experience of the saint, that is emphasised by these clauses.¹—“Through Christ Jesus” does not mean the same as “in Christ.” We are chosen *in* Christ to holiness,—a vital union whereby we became partakers of the divine nature. We are predestinated to adoption *through* Christ Jesus. By virtue of His sacrifice of Himself for us in His incarnation and atoning death, we have the rights and privileges of sons bestowed on us. *In* Christ, in union with Him, we obtain the nature, and *through* Jesus Christ, by His incarnate life and substitutionary sufferings and death, we obtain the title, which qualifies us for the household of God.

According to the good pleasure of His will.—The apostle in

¹ So too Hofmann, *Die Heilige Schrift Neuen Testaments*, iv. 1, p. 11, 1870, clearly perceived, in opposition to Rückert, De Wette, Bleek, etc.

these words answers the question as to the origin of our predestination to sonship. What led to this resolve? Nothing in us. Even as foreseen from eternity, our rebellion had deprived us of all claim to a servant's place, much more to that of children. Besides, what is here immediately spoken of is predestination to the privilege of adoption, not the election of our persons to its enjoyment. The moving cause must necessarily be in God. Then what in God? No unsatisfied need of His being. His was not a childless home. He had, from eternity, His own eternal Son. The moving cause was His own good pleasure. We have here what, in the language of the scholastic theology, was called the *efficient cause* of our salvation. All has resulted from this great cause. It pleased the Father (Col. i. 19),—such is the only explanation the apostle can give of the origination of the plan of man's redemption. The word here rendered "good pleasure" is rendered, in Rom. x. 1, "heart's desire." The most exact rendering would be "what seemed good" (Matt. xi. 26). Our predestination is an act of God's will, and has no ground outside of His own sovereign exercise of grace.¹

Ver. 6. *To the praise of the glory of His grace.*—It is not "the glory of His grace" that is the object of the praise. The absence of the article before "glory" (δόξης) makes this translation impossible. It is His grace that is praised as glorious, and so the phrase may be understood as simply equivalent to "His glorious grace." The apostle distinguishes a divine glory as resulting from the display of divine grace. There is a glory of power, a glory of purity, and here a glory of grace. God's grace is praised as affording a distinctive reflection of the divine glory. The act of God in predestinating us to adoption was an act of grace, purely of His own good

¹ For a clear exposition of the Pauline doctrine of predestination, see Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. iii. chap. 21, 22; Amesius, *Medulla*, chap. xxv.; Mozley, *Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*, 3rd ed., pp. 350-360, 1883. Also for a practical and popular statement: Elisha Coles, *Divine Sovereignty*. For an able but perverse criticism of the doctrine, as set forth in the Epistle to the Romans, see Pfleiderer's *Paulinism*, i. 244-258. For an equally perverse, but less able, treatment of the question, see Dale, *Lectures on Ephesians*, pp. 30-35.

pleasure. As thus absolutely free and unconditioned it is differentiated from simple love; and in this its distinguishing glory lies. The resulting praise corresponds to this glory. It is the highest praise of God that He finds His chief glory in the display of His grace. Our utterance of this praise is the final purpose of our predestination. To incite us to render this praise is the end which the apostle has in view in thus setting forth the glory of God's electing grace.—It is the chief glory of His grace that by it He has enclosed and encompassed us.

Wherewith He has graced [or favoured] us in the Beloved.—The adoption of the reading $\eta\varsigma$ ¹ instead of $\epsilon\nu\ \eta$ allows us all the more closely to connect the divine grace and its operation upon us. His grace is that which immediately acts upon us. It is not here that instrument whereby, but that aspect of His divine character, that quality of His divine nature wherewith, He blessed us. It is not a means to an end, but it is means and end together. It not only brings the blessing, but in it, therefore in its continuance, the blessing consists. The verb $\chiαριτοῦν$, rendered in the Authorised Version “hath made us accepted,” only occurs once elsewhere in the New Testament (Luke i. 28). It is first found in Sirach xviii. 17 ($\piαρὰ\ ἀνδρὶ\ κεχαριτωμένῳ$, “with a gracious man”). Hofmann and others suppose that it may be understood of a subjective state, a gracious disposition of soul in the elect, who in Christ have become worthy of love and favour. But the Pauline use of the term “grace,” $\chiάρις$, is entirely against this rendering. With Paul grace is always God's grace. What he says here is that God's grace has graced us. He has graced us ($\chiαρίτωσεν$) with His grace ($\chiάρις$). This is simply saying in a brilliant, memorable way, that He has bestowed His grace upon us. It is of God's acceptance of us, His favour shown toward us in His predestinating us unto adoption, that the apostle here speaks, not of the graciousness of soul wrought in us by the Spirit bestowed upon the favoured.—From the context it is evident that the apostle is here speaking of reconciliation and not of

¹ This reading, which is that of the MSS. A, B, \aleph , has been adopted by Lachmann, Meyer, Alford.

sanctification. It is the praise of God's grace, and not that of the graciousness of the Christian, which forms the theme of the apostle in our text.¹—It is "*in the Beloved*" that we experience and come to enjoy His grace. The Father loveth the Son, and the elect He loves in the Son; so that everywhere the Son is viewed as man's Covenant-Representative before God. The preposition "in" has here its full significance (John xv. 4). As in Adam so in Christ (Rom. v., 1 Cor. xv. 22). He is the elect in whom God's soul delighteth—the Representative in whom God beholds all His chosen ones. Here we have the true climax in the description of the work done directly by the Father in our redemption. The Father's electing love finds its highest glory in making His Beloved the instrument for conferring His grace upon us. The apostle will not pass from his account of the work done immediately by God the Father, without showing what comfort we have from the essential character of the divine action. The blessing which we have from God, the favour shown us by Him, is in God's own "Beloved." This title belongs to the Son of God by way of eminence. So in Col. i. 13, He is called *the Son of His love*. "As God hath put all light into the sun," says Goodwin, "and that diffuseth and communicateth light unto all the stars; so Jesus Christ hath extracted all the love of God to Himself, and through Him it is diffused upon us." It is the highest glory of God's grace toward us that it is "in Christ." To praise the Father for Christ is to praise "His *glorious* grace."

(2) *What Christ has done* (vers. 7–12).

While in the previous section (vers. 3–6), the apostle seems to have been enumerating the several blessings wrought for us by God the Father, he has really mentioned only the one gift bestowed on us by God. He closes his ascription of

¹ Chrysostom, followed by many expositors, interprets our passage of the subjective condition of the believer, and regards the apostle as saying that God has made us gracious: "When a child has outward beauty, and has besides a pervading grace in all its sayings, do we not call it a gracious child? Such as this are the faithful. Look what words the initiated utter? What can be more gracious than that mouth that breathes those wondrous words," etc. (*Homilies*, "Libr. of Fathers," v. 106, 1840).

praise to God by naming that gift in which are found treasured all the particular blessings referred to. If we are chosen, it is in Christ; if we are adopted, it is through Jesus Christ; if we are accepted or justified, it is in the Beloved. Here, then, in the mention of this one gift of the Father, is the most fitting transition point at which to turn from the praise of God, occasioned immediately by the consideration of the eternal counsels of the Father, to the praise of God awakened by a view of the actual work accomplished by the Son.

Ver. 7. *In whom we have the redemption through His blood.*—The relative clause “in whom” answers directly to the closing words of the former verse. Speaking there of the Father’s word, the apostle said that God had exercised His grace toward us “in the Beloved.” Now he advances to show what the Beloved, as the exponent of the Father’s eternal love, does for those—the *we* of the text—who are predestinated unto adoption. Hitherto only the past tense had been used; here we have an emphatic present.¹ The apostle is not speaking of what we have once for all got from Christ, but of what we *have* in Him, of what He is and ever will be to us. In regard to the redemption of which He is to speak, he says that we have it in the Beloved. It is a present experience. Though His death accomplished in the past is the condition of acceptance, the price required and actually paid, the redemption is conceived of as something that belongs to the whole living Person of Christ, rather than to any isolated act or incident of His life. *Christ* is the Redeemer. It is true that His blood, that is, His death on the cross, is properly defined as the redemption. But in order that His death should be our redemption, it must be preceded by His life of humiliation, and followed by His life

¹ Some manuscripts and early versions (S, D, *The Memphitic Version* of the second century, etc.,) read ἔσχομεν. Tischendorf thinks that the same tense must have been used in Col. i. 14, and in Eph. i. 7; but Lightfoot is of opinion that ἔσχομεν may have been the reading of the text of Col. i. 14, which lay before these early transcribers and translators, and was by them harmonistically introduced into Eph. i. 7. While Westcott and Hort give ἔσχομεν as a possible reading in Col. i. 14, they unhesitatingly accept ἔχομεν as the reading of Eph. i. 7.

of exaltation. When we speak of the death of Christ as redemption, we mean the death of Him who was made flesh and dwelt among us, and who, having died, became alive again for evermore. The word redemption as here used is emphatic, and so should be rendered "the redemption." The word does not mean simply deliverance, but deliverance effected by the special means of purchase. Even where this term is used in the New Testament, without any accompanying statement of the price paid, the idea of a ransom price is still present. When it is here said that the redemption is "through the blood of Christ," this is not to distinguish it as a purchased one, but to indicate precisely the particular price paid. The New Testament idea of redemption is more fully set forth in Rom. iii. 25 and Heb. ix. 14. There, as here, the blood of Christ is that which redeems, the expiation or propitiation. That it was the apostle's intention to make the idea of an expiatory sacrifice specially prominent here, may be seen from this, that he speaks not simply of Christ's death but of His blood. This is in thorough accordance with the sacrificial language of the Old Testament. It is not the mere death of the victim, but the shedding of its blood, and the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar, that constitutes a sacrifice to God. It is therefore Christ's sacrificial death that constitutes our redemption.¹ This one meaning of the word suits all passages in Paul's writings in which it occurs. Even in such expressions as "the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30), "the redemption of the body" (Rom. viii. 23), we are to think simply of the consummation secured by Christ's atoning work. What the risen Christ does, returning in glory, He does as the Christ who had died. There is no

¹ It is essential to the argument of those who, like Köstlin and Pfleiderer, regard Ephesians as marking an attempt at conciliation between the Pauline and Johannine types of doctrine, to point out resemblances between our epistle and the writings of John. It is curious and instructive to notice that when Köstlin (*Lehrbegriff des Evangeliums Johannis*, p. 375, Berlin 1843) affirms that in Ephesians and John there is no mention of justification and probably none of a vicarious satisfaction, and enumerates the phrases that do occur as describing the work of Christ, he gives restoration of sonship (i. 5), forgiveness of sins (i. 7), etc., but strangely passes over the phrase "redemption through His blood," of which forgiveness of sins is explanatory, and which we have seen undoubtedly presents the idea of expiatory and substitutionary sacrifice.

necessity for supposing, with Hofmann, two distinct uses of the word "redemption," according as it is directly referred to the suffering or to the glorified Christ. Redemption in Christ implies fellowship with Him at once in His sufferings and in the power of His resurrection. It involves not merely the undoing of sin's evil, but the realisation of God's eternal purpose concerning man.

The forgiveness of sins.—This describes the particular character of the redemption here spoken of. The redemption which we have in Christ, in order that it may secure for us the end of the divine election, that we should be "holy and without blemish" before God, must take the form of forgiveness of sins. This is primarily and fundamentally what we have "in the Beloved." If the term be understood in its precise and restricted sense as the initial act of God's grace in the spiritual experience of the individual, it would not, of course, be co-extensive with the idea of redemption. Redemption means nothing less than complete salvation (1 Cor. i. 30). It is the restoration of man to the predestinated position of adoption into God's family. The forgiveness of sins is but the first stage in salvation, yet so essential and fundamental that it may be put for all. The reference to it appropriately follows, and was evidently suggested by, the mention of the blood of Christ. For without shedding of blood there is no *remission* (Heb. ix. 22),—the same word being rendered remission and forgiveness. As redemption is assigned to the culminating action in the work of Christ, His expiatory death upon the cross, so forgiveness is regarded by Christ Himself as His greatest and most characteristic achievement. The difficulty of forgiveness is emphasised.¹ It is easier to make a sick man whole than to forgive a man his sins (Mark

¹ The true doctrine of forgiveness, according to this passage, and in accordance with the whole scope of the New Testament teaching, is that God exacts the penalty and remits the sin. The word "redemption" is ἀπολύτρωσις, which means the payment of the λύτρον or price set upon the head of the captive. Ἀφῆσις is simply the letting off, used either of release from prison or remission of debt. But this act is final in contrast to πάρισις, which is merely a suspension of procedure. See Trench, *New Testament Synonyms*, pp. 114-119. Nowhere in Scripture do we read of Ἀφίναί λύτρον, but ἄφῃσις παραπτώμάτων, or ἁμαρτιῶν. See Pearson on the *Creed*, ii. 304, Oxford 1843.

ii. 9, 10). Forgiveness, in the full and accurate sense in which it is used to describe the act of God, implies a thorough knowledge and due estimation of the offence, and a complete restoration of favour to the offender.¹ Man is often said to forgive, but in his case neither of these elements is present in perfection. He has not the absolute holiness of nature necessary for perceiving the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and regarding it with uncompromising aversion; and he has not the perfect goodness of being that would lead him to put away from his heart every trace of resentment and every recollection of wrong. What is impossible with man is possible with God; but even with God, strictly speaking, this forgiveness is possible only in the person of the God-Man. The God in whom we have forgiveness is God the Son, who has taken our flesh and shed His blood in our stead for our sins. The death of Christ is the revelation of God's hatred of sin and His love of us. Nothing more is needed for the forgiveness of sins but this combination of perfect holiness and perfect love in the all-wise God. He knows what has to be done and how to do it; what man's sin is, and what can remove it; and His acting upon this knowledge is the redemption through the blood of Christ. The forgiveness of sins, when conceived of according to the divine idea of forgiveness, is redemption through Christ's blood. When redemption is thus scripturally defined, there is no danger, as Candlish has acutely remarked, of lapsing into the strange and unfortunate mistake of certain fathers and early schoolmen, who spoke of the redemption price as paid to Satan. Pfleiderer very unfairly associates this erroneous conception with Pauline teaching. In what he regards as the original system of Paul, he admits that "the substantiating in the person of the devil, of that which requires expiation, is not yet completed;" but he refers to the Epistles to the Hebrews and to the Colossians as already bringing the death of Christ into relation to the devil. This theologian thinks that the early Pauline conception of God's wrath against sin, instead of being viewed as an element in the divine character alongside of His infinite love, came to be thought of by later

¹ See Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, pp. 129-134, Lond. 1883.

Paulinists, such as the writer of our epistle, as a separate entity, personified in the devil, to whom satisfaction had to be made. Our text fairly answers this, and shows its baselessness. As God only can forgive sins, the identification of forgiveness with redemption associates directly with God both the act of redemption and the ransom. To God it is paid, by Him it is accepted, and by Him also it is recognised as bringing to those for whom it has been paid the forgiveness of sins.

According to the riches of His grace.—It is God's grace in Christ that is here referred to, in accordance with the true biblical mode of dealing with Trinitarian distinctions, one Person being in no case wholly separated from the others. The clause forms a parallel to the close of the fifth verse. It characterises that forgiveness which we owe to divine grace. This is its measure. "It is more than a royal gift; it is a gift of royalty. To be cleansed by His Son's blood, is to be new creatures in His blood" (Pulsford). Riches, as applied to the fulness of the divine grace, is a common expression with Paul. Such wealth of grace is needed to meet our provocations. The employment here of this whole clause, which elsewhere (ii. 7) is used to describe Christ's own fulness, shows that the apostle attached supreme importance to that redemption of which the most characteristic and fundamental manifestation is the forgiveness of sins.

Ver. 8. *Which He made to abound toward us.*—This transitive rendering of the verb is to be preferred to its intransitive meaning, as given in the "wherein he hath abounded" of our Authorised Version. Not only is the grace in itself rich, but the giving of it is liberal, as by a royal giver. He causes the riches of His grace to overflow in our hearts. He lavishes upon us that which, if given at all, even in the smallest measure, would be most precious.

In all wisdom and prudence.—Some ancient expositors, such as Chrysostom and Jerome, attached this clause to the one following, understanding it of God in regard to His discovery of the mystery of His will. Certain modern commentators, also, whether joining it with the clauses preceding or following, have applied it to God. Our Authorised Version,

with its rendering of the previous clause, no doubt encouraged this application of the words. The rendering supported by us naturally associates this wisdom and prudence with the grace which is God's rich gift liberally bestowed upon us: but if we say, "God hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence," we naturally apply those latter terms to God. But against this application of the clause two reasons may be adduced, either of which is absolutely decisive: (1) This "all" of the text cannot be rendered "supreme," but only "of each and every kind." Its meaning is extensive, rather than intensive. But only supreme wisdom could be suitably attributed to God. We may say of Him that in Him is all wisdom, but we could not fittingly say of Him that He does this or that "in all wisdom."¹ (2) The "prudence" of our text, which is the result of the exercise of wisdom, that quality and practical facility or insight that comes of experience, and the application of the powers of a wise heart to the details of life, could not with any sense of propriety be attributed to God. The clause, therefore, can be properly applied only to characterise the grace which God has abundantly bestowed upon His adopted children. We find a sufficiently close parallel in 1 Cor. i. 5, where believers are said to be enriched in Christ "in all utterance and in all knowledge." Wisdom and prudence, regarded as gifts of grace, precisely correspond to the spirit of wisdom and prudence (ver. 18), which is said to be given of God. Wisdom was regarded in Greek philosophy as the highest of all the intellectual virtues, and prudence was defined as the application of wisdom to details in the common life of daily duty. The verb answering to this word prudence is rendered in our Revised Version (Luke i. 17), "to walk in the wisdom of the just." God's grace, therefore, abounds toward us in bestowing a wise heart which moves and persuades us to walk in right ways. And thus in the religious and moral, in the intellectual and ethical spheres, for thought and life, God makes His grace to abound toward us.

Ver. 9. *Having made known the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure.*—In respect of construction, "having

¹ This clause is examined very carefully by Harless, *Kommentar*, pp. 32-34.

made known" corresponds to the "having predestinated" of the fifth verse. As the apostle before links together election and predestination, as mutually suggesting and requiring one another, so here the grace of God, that shows itself in the bestowing of wisdom and prudence, also necessarily manifests itself in the imparting of knowledge. That which is made known is described as a mystery. This word must have been very familiar to the Ephesians. Among their superstitious rites the mysteries occupied a prominent place, symbolic observances in which only the initiated could take part. The apostle's use of the word, however, is fitted to point out one of the characteristic distinctions between the spirit and aims of the most highly-cultured pagan religions and those of the Christian religion. With the pagan religionist a mystery meant something that could be made known only to the favoured few. With Paul it means something that had been hidden, and which must have remained hidden, unless some special revelation should make it known. This was the meaning which the word had in the apocryphal books, where it was of frequent occurrence, used of family secrets, court secrets, and in one passage at least (Wisd. ii. 22), just as in the saying of Paul before us, "the secret counsels of God." In a precisely similar way Theodotion uses it in Ps. xxv. 14 to translate the Hebrew סֵתֶר, "the secret of the Lord." In the sense of "the secret counsel of God" it occurs in the Gospels (Matt. xiii. 11; Mark iv. 41; Luke viii. 10); also in Rev. x. 7; and very frequently in the writings of Paul (2 Thess. ii. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 51; Rom. xi. 25, xvi. 25; 1 Tim. iii. 9), and with express reference to one particular "secret counsel" of God, the admission of the Gentiles to gospel privileges (Eph. i. 9, ii. 3, 4, 9, vi. 19; Col. i. 26, 27, ii. 2, iv. 3). See also notes on chap. v. 32, where the word is used in another sense. The usage of this word is fully and suggestively treated by Hatch, *Essays in Biblical Greek*, pp. 57-59, Oxford 1889. What the particular truth referred to may be, must be discovered from the context. The truth hitherto hidden, but now made known by the apostle in the Gospel, is the truth that God has appointed His Son to be the Saviour of all that believe in

Him, whether Jew or Gentile; that He makes all one in one salvation, in Christ Jesus. Read the sixth verse with due emphasis on "us," in the light of chap. ii. 11, and compare with chap. iii. 8, 9, where preaching to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ is made parallel to making all men see the mystery that had been hidden. Observe how, in the other passages in our epistle where the word occurs, excepting in v. 32, where it means something in its own nature mysterious, it signifies that which only a divine revelation can make known (iii. 3, 9, vi. 19). Modern sceptical philosophy, and especially the materialistic and semi-materialistic philosophy of our own country, would have us regard the knowledge of God as something unattainable. God, as to being, doing, and will, is, according to this false science, unknowable. According to Paul, God and the things of God are not unknowable, but they are a mystery. To make them known a divine revelation is necessary. The best commentary on this will be found in 1 Cor. ii. 6-16.—The imparting of this knowledge is according to God's good pleasure. A revelation was necessary if we were to know this mystery, but there was no reason why we should be made to know it, save that which originated in the gracious and sovereign purpose of God. Of His own good pleasure He has made known to us the mystery. It was the same gracious will in God which formed the general plan predestinating unto adoption, which in time made itself known in our redemption.

Which He purposed in Himself.—This good pleasure, which, according to the distinct statement of the fifth verse, is a function of the divine will, here expresses itself in the form of a divine purpose. And this purpose is quite properly regarded as taken "in Himself."¹ Hofmann has argued

¹ The reading *ἐν αὐτῷ* is preferred by Ellicott and Meyer, and *ἐν αὐτῷ* by Lachmann, Tischendorf, Westcott, and Hort. Meyer thinks that the latter reading would require the reference to be to Christ, rather than the Father; while Olshausen, with better right, thinks that either reading may be used with reference to the Father. The grammarians have pointed out that in the New Testament the reflexive *ἑαυτοῦ* seems never to be contracted into *αὐτοῦ*. It is also to be remembered that diaeretical marks do not appear in New Testament MSS. before the eighth century. The reflexive use of the

elaborately in favour of a reference to Christ. This would, of course, be theologically sound, for the purpose of God is elsewhere spoken of as made in Christ (iii. 11) as well as carried out in Him. But ordinarily the eternal purpose of God, so far as the conception of it is concerned, is connected with the Father. Here, too, the reference most naturally is to Him whose will is made known.

The tenth verse seems at first sight fraught with difficulties, but these may in large measure be removed, by keeping clearly before us the intention of the apostle in introducing such a statement at this point. In forming His gracious purpose, God had in view to give a unity to all His acts of grace. The point of union is found in Christ. He is the centre of that universe in which the divine purpose is harmoniously carried out, and it is He who gives harmony to the whole. The revelation of Christ, therefore, is that revelation of God's purpose which has as its end the reconciling of all things to Himself.

Ver. 10. *With the dispensation of the fulness of times in view.*—The word “dispensation,” or economy, *οἰκονομία*, is used again in this epistle (chap. iii. 2, 9), and properly means exercise of an office on the part of an administrator or steward over a household. The reference here is limited to the household of God, in which apostles and their fellow-workers are stewards of the manifold grace of God (1 Pet. iv. 10). The revelation of the mystery of the divine will was to proceed in such a way, as to carry out the principle of this administration, which required a gradual unfolding through the ages or times, and a consummation when the fulness of times had come (Gal. iv. 4). The “in” of the Authorised Version is inadequate as a translation of the *εἰς*, which here points out the fact that the divine purpose, now first made known and realised, has reached that goal toward which it had tended through all the ages. We here meet, for the first time, with the word *Pleroma*, which plays so important a part in this

αὐτός, however, is quite common throughout the Greek Testament. See Lightfoot on Col. i. 20, and the references there to Buttmann's Grammar. Winer has a preference for *αὐτός*, but is very guarded and careful in his remarks (*Grammar of New Testament Greek*, § xxii. 5).

epistle, as well as in Colossians. When used with reference to times and seasons, as here and in Gal. iv. 4, it means simply the completeness which is given by means of the dispensation spoken of. Earlier dispensations had, indeed, made their respective contributions, but they were merely preliminary and preparatory, and had fulness imparted to them only by the offering of Christ. It was the completing and fulfilling of the promise and prophecy of those earlier dispensations, which characterised and distinguished that dispensation of which the apostle speaks. The phrase, "when the fulness of the time was come" (Gal. iv. 4), marks the beginning of a new era in the management of this great household, which, after having thus begun, continues unbroken and unchanged. The "dispensation of the fulness of times," therefore, is equivalent to the gospel dispensation introduced into the world by Christ's ministry, the continued proclamation of which in His Church constitutes the revelation of the mystery of God's will.

To gather together in one all things in the Christ.—This is the object of the divine purpose, the reason for which God made known the mystery of His will. In Christ He had revealed His saving will, and now the apostle shows us why He did so. There is no authority in the text for the translation "in Christ as Head."¹ Afterwards, in ver. 22, the apostle speaks of Christ's Headship over the Church, but here he speaks of Christ's central significance for all creation. The words "to gather up into one" (*ἀνακεφαλαιοῦσθαι*) is only used elsewhere by Paul in Rom. xiii. 9, where it describes the summing up of all the precepts of the law in one commandment, and so has there precisely the same meaning as in our text. A point of unity is revealed "in the Christ," in whom all things find a common centre, and cease to be a mere multitude of units. This idea of recon-

¹ Moule, in the Cambridge Bible, thus translates the clause, and restricts its application to the Church. That such restriction is expressly made toward the close of the chapter, is rather a reason against making the restriction here. The verb used is derived from *κεφαλαιον*, not from *κεφαλή*; and these words may be rendered respectively "heading" and "head." All things are summed up under one comprehensive category in Christ. This at least is God's purpose, which alone here comes into consideration.

ciliation, the restoration of a harmony that had been disturbed and overthrown, is introduced very appropriately in the middle of a paragraph regarding redemption. The purpose of redemption is reconciliation, and all objects and beings affected by this redemption are brought into such relations with the Redeemer that they, though *disjecta membra* before, become parts of one perfect whole. The figure is borrowed from the art of the rhetorician, who, after having gone over in detail the various points involved in the subject of which he treats, at the close of his discourse, in order to leave on his readers' minds a powerful impression, recapitulates and brings together in a summary form what had been argued out at length. And so here the apostle says that God resolved to gather up into one all the dispensational contributions to His eternal scheme in creation, providence, and grace, and to show in the person of "the Christ" the one purpose of the universe. The emphatic position assigned to the words "in the Christ," is intended to give prominence to the person of Christ as the leading idea of the passage. This is aided further by the repetition of "in Him" after the next clause.

*Those which are in heaven and those which are on earth,*¹—These words determine the range of the "all things" which are the subject of God's reconciliation. The neuter is here used with the evident intention of making the reference universal, and including not only persons but also things. It is to the universe of being that the influence of the divine work extends. Man's sin had brought discord into God's universe, and in Christ the original and ideal harmony is restored. The reconciliation accomplished has undoubtedly affected inanimate creatures as well as sentient creatures, and the lower creation as well as the rational (Rom. viii. 19–23). If we keep in view the "*τὰ πάντα*," the universe of being, as the whole which is made up of "things in heaven and things on earth," we shall see at once the inadequacy and inappropriateness of defining these elements respectively as consisting of Jewish and of Gentile Christians. The same

¹ The *ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς* adopted by Ellicott, Harless, and others, is to be preferred to the *ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς* adopted by Alford, Meyer, etc. In all instances in the New Testament, *ἐν*, and not *ἐπὶ*, is joined with *οὐρανοί*.

may be said of the application of these terms to saints in heaven and saints on earth. We must, evidently, give to the words that unrestricted meaning which the plain literal sense of the text requires.

Ver. 11. *In Him, in whom also we have been made possessors of our lot.*—The relative clause here, while, of course, pointing to the same divine person named in ver. 5, “the Beloved,” in whom God shows the riches of His grace, must be immediately connected with the Christ of ver. 10, regarded as the centre of unity in God’s universe. And to make this reference emphatic, the “in Him” (ἐν αὐτῷ) resumes the reference to Christ as the centre of unity. In the fifth verse, and the passage dependent on it, the apostle had said that whatever we are we owe to Him, for in His redemption God had made His grace abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence. In the tenth verse, and the passage dependent upon it, the apostle says that whatever we have as a possession we owe to Him, for “all things” (ver. 10) being in Him, there is nothing we can have outside of Him. It is “in Him,” therefore, that we have a portion allotted to us. The verb that is rendered by our translators, “we have obtained an inheritance,” literally means we have been made possessors by the lot. The reading of the Authorised Version just quoted is excellent, only that it is well to avoid the word inheritance, and rather to give prominence to the idea of the lot. We have in English no passive voice of the verb “to inherit,” though we can say “to be disinherited,” and the nearest equivalent of the passive is “to be endowed with an inheritance.” This is the meaning of the words of the apostle, if only, remembering that it is brought about by the use of the lot, we banish the idea of succession by right. In Christ we have our portion allotted. Goodwin makes admirable practical use of the consideration that what comes to us as it were by lot, casually so far as we are concerned, undeserved and unsought for by us, is yet, as the following clause shows, on God’s part, assigned definitely and particularly to us by His own predestinating grace. The idea was certainly suggested by the story of the division of the land among the Israelites. Their several inheritances were not

gained by their own strength. The Old Testament saints likewise understood that their real inheritance was in God Himself, and not in any separate gifts coming from Him. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance" (Ps. xvi. 5). But while admitting this origin for the particular phrase employed, we must remember that the reference of our text is not restricted by Paul to the Jewish Christians. There is no difference to Jew and Gentile; all receive the inheritance by the same means, and on the same terms. The Revisers, following many distinguished critics and commentators, render the clause, "we were made a heritage."¹ But not only is this idea never associated with the use of any of the derivatives of the verb used in our text, but it is quite unsuitable in the present connection, and more particularly as coming before the similar phrase in the fourteenth verse. The inheritance is here viewed as our inheritance (see ver. 14; also v. 5; Col. i. 12), and specially as consisting in God-bestowed holiness (Acts xx. 32, xxvi. 18); and in every case the inheritance is regarded as constituting part of the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. i. 13), with whom, according to Rom. viii. 17, we are joint-heirs.

Having been predestinated, according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will.—The word "predestinated" was used before in ver. 5, but it is now introduced in quite a different connection. There it was the eternal counsel of grace concerning us that was made prominent; here, on the other hand, the subjects of this counsel, those predestinated, are specially in view as those destined to the obtaining of a glorious possession. This inheritance is made sure to us by our being predestinated by God's own purpose to the obtaining of it. Additional assurance is given to the heirs of such an inheritance, when they are reminded that the purposes of Him who has thus

¹ Grimm renders thus. So also Alford, Ellicott, Olshausen, Cremer (who bases the interpretation on the assumption that ver. 11 refers to Jewish Christians). On the other side, see Harless and Meyer. As this is the only instance of the use of the verb in the New Testament, it is reasonable to consult the usage of the derivative substantive, *κληρονομία*. This term is invariably used of our inheritance, and never of God's inheritance in us. Compare ver. 18; also Gal. iii. 18; Col. iii. 24.

determined cannot be thwarted. It is His good pleasure to give them the kingdom, and all things are subject to His will, and at His disposal. Compare Ps. xxxiii. 11; Luke xii. 32. The phrase "counsel (*βουλή*) of His own will (*θέλημα*)" indicates that the divine purpose has been the result of what in human language we call deliberation on the part of God, and also of hearty and sympathetic volition. But the counsel which God takes is with Himself, just as He has been described as purposing a purpose with Himself, and His act of willing determines the accomplishment of His purpose. The divine wisdom and love are equally involved in the forming and effecting of this eternal purpose.

Ver. 12. *That we should be to the praise of His glory.*—In Christ we have been made possessors with the end of God's glory in view. Thus the apostle concludes the section concerning the redemption wrought by Christ (vers. 7–12), as he had concluded the section concerning the eternal counsels of the Father (ver. 6). The final aim of that redemption is the securing of praise to the glory of God. In the former instance, however, it was God's own act considered simply in itself, here it is the result of grace upon us, that yields praise to God. There is, therefore, a development here. God's eternal purpose yields glory to God; it is glorifying to Him that He should have conceived the gracious thought. A yet higher degree of glory is yielded, when, in the fulness of times, the Incarnate Son gives expression to this thought.

Who hoped before in Christ.—The laboured attempts that have been made to interpret this phrase in such a way as to indicate no distinction between one class emphatically referred to as "we," and another similarly referred to as "ye," bear on the very face of them unmistakeable marks of special pleading. Such an interpretation does indeed at first sight seem to be favoured by the use of "we" in the previous clause. The apostle has used the words "we," "us," "our," already twelve times in these twelve verses, and in all these instances he has undoubtedly employed them simply to include with himself all the saints and believers at Ephesus. At this point, however, in the interests of that unity secured in Christ, he takes cognisance of a distinction which must

have been all the while present to the minds of his readers, in order that he may convince them that even this seemingly radical distinction is done away in the great Reconciler. What the following section shows them to have in common redounds to the praise of Him who has brought it about in the fulness of the times.—To have hoped before in Christ, is to have trusted before the actual manifestation of the object of this trust. It designates those who had cherished the Messianic hope.

Observe how this paragraph begins with the first immediate result of Christ's death, the forgiveness of sins, and ends with the ultimate result, the reconciliation of all things in Christ, the Mediator. This reconciliation is not that commonly spoken of as universal restoration. The reconciliation intended is that effected by redemption, as the forgiveness of sins. Those who are reconciled unto God are indeed to the praise of His glory; but in order that we, in any sense involving true blessedness to ourselves, may contribute to that glory, we must have first believed. "In Christ," as we have seen, is the keynote of this whole section. We have had God's election "in Christ," and here we have our reconciliation unto God "in Christ." Those who believe, who have hoped in Him, who are redeemed by His blood, are brought into mystical union with Christ. In respect of destiny in the divine economy of grace, Christ and the believer are one. But then, again, Christ Himself has said, "I and the Father are one." Thus in Christ all duality ceases, all disharmony is at an end, and all that is redeemable is reconciled unto God. The apostle simply takes no cognisance here of the fate of those who remain unforgiven, without Christ.

(3) *What the Holy Spirit has done* (vers. 13, 14).

Ver. 13. *In whom ye also*.—Here we enter upon the third division of our first section. The apostle, in vers. 13, 14, renders praise to God for the work specially wrought by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit, however, is the Spirit of Christ, and therefore this division appropriately opens with the familiar phrase "in whom." As in Christ we have redemption, so in Christ through the Spirit we have the continuance of redemp-

tion blessings. It is to be observed that the apostle now emphatically contrasts the Gentile with the Jewish Christians, as those who had not previously the Messianic hope, but out of heathenism embraced the faith of Christ. This contrast is only introduced for a moment. The opening words of the following verse emphasise the fact of their oneness in the possession of the common inheritance.

Having heard the word of truth.—The word which they heard is called the word of truth, because, on the one hand, it is true, and because, on the other hand, it deals with objective truth. It is the word of Him who cannot lie (Titus i. 2). As the truth, the word is the instrument of sanctification (John xvii. 17), of regeneration (James i. 18), and the provision committed to the care of God's stewards for distribution (2 Tim. ii. 15). Calvin says, "The gospel is not only certain truth which cannot deceive, but is by way of eminence *the word of truth*, as if, strictly speaking, there was no truth but itself." This is carefully and temperately expressed. The foolish exaggerations of the Hutchinsonians, who seek to trace all scientific truth to Scripture, receive no countenance when we remember that the apostle is concerned only with what pertains to salvation. Outside of this word there is no truth that has saving power. The truth as it is in Jesus, who is the truth, constitutes this word.

The gospel of your salvation.—These words more explicitly characterise the word of truth which has been heard. In itself considered, it was the word of truth; in reference to those who believe in it, it is the gospel of their salvation. As many as received it, found in their experience that the essential constituent of its truth lay in its saving power. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Their own experience of it would distinguish it from every other message claiming to be a gospel, so that they would feel, with the apostle (Gal. i. 6, 7), that all such pretended gospels were really no gospels, but only perversions of the gospel of Christ. The test of the truth of the gospel was that it brought salvation.

And having believed in it.—So far as the construction of the sentence is concerned, the difficulty lies in this clause.

The repetition of the $\epsilon\nu\ \tilde{\omega}$ of the earlier clause is ordinarily explained as intended to give emphasis to the thought that every step in the process of salvation is taken in immediate relation to Christ. Ellicott, maintaining this view, practically discards the second $\epsilon\nu\ \tilde{\omega}$ in his translation. This is explicitly done by Davies, who regards these words as "repeated for the sake of perspicuity," and then naïvely goes on to say, "If we omit these words, the sentence proceeds with grammatical smoothness."¹ The translation, thus offered by Ellicott, Davies, and others, is really possible only when we omit the repeated phrase. The sentence is not long enough or complicated enough to require the use of the *oratio suspensa*; and even if this were, so $\acute{\upsilon}\mu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ rather than $\epsilon\nu\ \tilde{\omega}$ would be repeated. Others, again, have broken up the sentence into two by supplying a verb after the first $\epsilon\nu\ \tilde{\omega}$. This was either borrowed from $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\lambda\eta\rho\acute{\omega}\theta\eta\mu\epsilon\nu$ (Harless) or from $\pi\rho\omicron\eta\lambda\pi\iota\kappa\acute{o}\tau\alpha\varsigma$ (Calvin, etc., who would reduce it by omitting the $\pi\rho\omicron$ as unsuitable), or was secured by supplying the substantive verb and reading "in whom ye also are" (Meyer, Alford, etc.). But these are all artificial and needless, even if on other grounds allowable. The question now naturally suggests itself, "Does the second $\epsilon\nu\ \tilde{\omega}$ refer to the same subject as the first?" Calvin regards the sealing of the Spirit here spoken of as imparting certainty to the minds of believers regarding the word of God and their own salvation, and Meyer, improving upon this hint, distinctly refers the $\epsilon\nu\ \tilde{\omega}$ to the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$. To believe in the gospel (Mark i. 15), though not a common phrase, is yet quite allowable.—The hearing intended by the apostle is thus more exactly characterised as followed up by the exercise of faith. What was heard was also believed. The hearing was of such a kind as leads up to faith.—Hearing the word of truth, hearing it as the gospel of salvation, and believing in it, are the conditions to the receiving of the sealing of the Spirit.

Were sealed with the Spirit of promise, the Holy One.—The Holy Spirit is the seal. It is not said that the Holy Spirit simply applies the seal, but that He is the seal which God applies unto those who are in Christ. "God will be

¹ Davies, *Epistles of Paul to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon*, 2nd ed., p. 30, Lond. 1884.

trusted first; and when ye have set to your seal that God is true in His word, God will set to His seal after your believing" (Goodwin). Besides the outward witness to our adoption of God in the word of truth believed, we have the inward witness thereto of the Holy Spirit (Rom. viii. 16).—He is called the Spirit of promise, because His mission is absolutely the fulfilment of the divine promise. The Old Testament is full of the promise of the Spirit; and during His ministry Christ always represents His work as preparatory to the descent of the Spirit, which could take place only after His work on earth had been accomplished. Just as the appearing of Christ fulfilled the purpose of the Father, so the sending by Christ of His Spirit was the fulfilling of the purpose of the Son. The will of God, or the promise of salvation, whether made in terms of the old dispensation or the new, was perfectly given effect to in the mission of the Spirit.—Very emphatic, too, is the appellation "holy" as given here to the Spirit. It is as if the apostle had said, "Ye were sealed with the Spirit, *yea, with God's own Holy Spirit.*" The Spirit as the Spirit of holiness, therefore, is the seal, inasmuch as He bears the perfect image of God which is to be reimpresed upon the heart of the believer. The result of the sealing as regards God is this, "The Lord knoweth them that are His,"—that is, He recognises in them His own likeness. And the result of the sealing as regards ourselves is this, "Having named the name of the Lord, to depart from all iniquity." God seals us with the Holy Spirit when He gives the Spirit to dwell within us, and thus makes us partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4).

Ver. 14. *Who is the earnest of our inheritance.*—The same idea is expressed by Paul in 2 Cor. i. 22, v. 5, where he uses the same word (ἀρραβών), and in Rom. viii. 23, where he distinguishes believers from others in the world as having the first-fruits (ἀπαρχή) of the Spirit.—The word here rendered "earnest" is distinctly borrowed from the language of commerce, introduced, as is supposed, by the Phœnician traders. The Hebrew עֲרָבֹן is simply rendered in Greek letters in the ἀρραβών of our text, and this again appears little changed in the Latin *Arrhabo*, later *Arrha*. The Scotch word *arles*, and

even the English *earnest*, are probably connected with the same word. It means more than a pledge. It is a pledge consisting of a sample of that which afterwards will be paid in full. In common transactions it often takes the form of a small coin. This is of the same sort as the larger sum agreed upon; and so, that which the Spirit imparts now is of the same kind as that hoped for. "The earnest," says Eadie, "is the inheritance in miniature." As days of heaven enjoyed on earth enliven the Christian's thoughts of heaven, and quicken his desires after meetness for it, while at the same time they deepen the conviction that such an inheritance is in store for him; so the earnest of the inheritance, afforded by the Spirit impressing Himself upon the believer's heart, intensifies his longings and renders his conceptions more vivid, while it increases his assurance that at last he shall enter upon the full possession of that spiritual inheritance of which he has now received a sample.—The inheritance is the common possession and hope of all believers, both Jews and Gentiles. It is reserved for us in heaven.

With a view to the redemption of the possession.—The preposition translated in our Authorised Version "until" (*εἰς*) is here, just as in ver. 10, properly "with a view to," "in order to." It indicates that what follows expresses the end of the Spirit's sealing.—The word rendered in our Authorised Version "purchased possession" (*περιποιήσις*) is used several times in the New Testament, sometimes with an active, sometimes with a passive signification. Thus, in 1 Thess. v. 9, it is used actively in the phrase, "the obtaining of salvation;" so in 2 Thess. ii. 14, "the obtaining of the glory;" and in Heb. x. 29, "the saving of the soul." But this sense is here evidently inappropriate, and we must have recourse to its passive signification. It is that which has been acquired. And here again we have to choose between the two interpretations of the possession or inheritance, as that of the believer or as that of God. In 1 Pet. ii. 9, the context demands the rendering "a people for God's own possession." A similar instance occurs in Acts xx. 28, where the Church of God is described as that which he had purchased (*περιποιήσατο*) with His own blood. But the

same rule of giving weight to the context, which has determined our rendering of these passages, when applied to the passage before us, requires that we should understand the possession as the inheritance of the saints. The apostle is still speaking of that which the sealing of the Spirit effects for us. It is the earnest of our inheritance which we now enjoy, with the prospect of yet obtaining possession of that inheritance itself.—This “redemption” (ἀπολύτρωσις) of our text is to be distinguished from that of ver. 7. The word indicates invariably a complete redemption;¹ but in its initial form, as the forgiveness of sins, it is only ideally perfect, and we have to look forward to “the day of redemption” (iv. 30), when it shall become really perfect. It is this perfected realisation of redemption that is spoken of in our text. Redemption by the blood of Christ is the original purchase of our possession. Forgiveness through His blood provides us with our title to the inheritance. The Holy Spirit of Christ, as seal, produces in us God’s likeness, re-creates in us the divine nature, and the completion of the Spirit’s work on us perfects our redemption.

To the praise of His glory.—This is not to be regarded merely as joint result with redemption of the sealing of the Spirit. The work of the Spirit rather as a whole, upon Jews and Gentiles who have believed in Christ, is directed to this end of the divine glory. Whether, then, it be the Father (vers. 3–6), or the Son (vers. 7–12), or the Holy Spirit (vers. 13, 14), whose personality is regarded as prominent, in every aspect of the work of grace before Christ’s coming, at His coming, and in view of His second coming, the result is praise glorifying to God. In this concurring tribute of praise to the One God, we have the divine Unity in Trinity emphasised.

¹ Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § lxxvii., calls attention to Paul’s preference for ἀπολύτρωσις. He never uses the simple λύτρωσις. The reason for this preference has been supposed by Chrysostom to lie in this, that the ἀπό gave the idea of completeness; as it does also in ἀποκαταλλάσσειν (Eph. ii. 16), and in other favourite words of the apostle.

SECT. III.—THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIANS
(Chap. i. 15–19).

After his direct expression of thanks to God, the apostle appropriately turns to record the feelings which the evidences of God's work of grace among the Ephesians had occasioned in him. He was not an unmoved and indifferent spectator of the gracious results which showed themselves in the members of the church at Ephesus, their faith and love (with evident allusion to the words of greeting in ver. 1); and he now shows how intense the interest is which he takes in watching their spiritual development, by not only giving thanks to God for what they had become, but also by praying earnestly for their further guidance and help toward perfection. Having in the previous section acknowledged God's goodness in bestowing the blessings of grace, so as to excite his readers to fuller praise, he now makes known to them how his love for them constrains him ever to pray that they may grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Ver. 15. *Wherefore I also.*—This connects the new section with the whole of the preceding section, and not merely with its closing division. It is the fact of God having blessed (ver. 3) those Ephesians with such spiritual blessings, that causes the apostle to renew his thanksgiving, and encourages him to continue his prayers on their behalf. Thanksgiving for answers to prayer is incomplete if not followed up by prayers that urge larger requests. Devout meditation on blessings received will afford grounds for continuing instant in prayer.

*Having heard of the faith prevailing among you in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints.*¹—There were, no doubt, fre-

¹ Westcott and Hort, following the oldest manuscripts, omit τὴν ἀγάπην. Meyer properly characterises this as a copyist's error. The common text reads καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην τῶν. It is easy to see how a copyist might pass from the one τὴν to the other, and thus in an early exemplar make an omission which might rule subsequent transcriptions. Compare Col. i. 4; Philem. 5. Had the received reading been the result of harmonising tendencies, the Colossian text would have been more exactly copied. Then, again, no suitable meaning can be got from the reading that omits the words. Dale, adopting the Revisers' version,

quent communications between Paul and the different Christian communities with which he was connected. In the case before us, the apostle probably refers to cheering accounts which he had received from Tychicus. He had heard that the community as a whole was exercising faith (τὴν καθ' ὑμᾶς πίστιν) in the Lord Jesus, and so proving faithful ver. 1; Col. i. 4; Philem. 5). They were exhibiting, also, the good points of faith, showing that their faith was not dead, but that, working by love, it approved itself in good works. Faith is the primary grace out of which all the others spring. It unites to Christ, to God (who is love), and so reveals itself in love to God and our fellow-men. The apostle delights in thus bringing together the Christian creed and the Christian life. At the same time, by thus prominently specifying the grace of brotherly love, he may seek to stimulate the Ephesians to its further exercise. It is just possible, in view of his emphatic words at the close of an address, some years before, to the Ephesian elders (Acts xx. 35), that some harsh and selfish conduct or want of genuine brotherliness had been manifesting itself. If this were so, and if the hint supplied in the passage before us was not taken, the intimate connection between the two great commandments will easily explain how in after years the Ephesian church, which had failed in love to the brethren, was found to have left her first love (Rev. ii. 4).

Ver. 16. *Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.*—This is not to be regarded as an exaggerated expression, signifying merely the apostle's deep thankfulness. The good news so filled his heart that unbroken thankfulness of spirit has continued. It is to be understood in the spirit of the injunctions, "Pray always," "Rejoice always." And so long as the spirit of thankfulness endures, the spirit of prayer will continue active. That the apostle makes mention of the

"having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which is among you and shown toward all the saints," makes this comment, "The reality of that faith was still shown in their spirit and conduct to all saints. Paul means that they recognised the obligations which were created by a common faith." This rendering has to be eked out by supplying the verb "show," and even then the use of the term "faith," to indicate the Christian's duty to his fellow-Christians, which is the fruit of faith, is violent in the extreme.

Ephesians in his prayers, is a proof that he ceases not to thank God on their behalf. His prayers indeed are, in the proper sense, devotions; praise is ever joined with petition.—The following verse shows that his prayers were not simple requests on their behalf for something as yet not possessed by them, but embraced also devout and grateful reflections on graces already bestowed.

Ver. 17. *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.*—Here, again, we have that peculiar and profound expression which is previously met with in the third verse. This name is used here partly, no doubt, to keep up the connection between this section and the last, and partly to show that the apostle's prayer is addressed to the God of salvation, the Sender of the Son, in whom we have redemption, and in whom we have that Spirit who secures the completion of redemption. Weiss (*New Testament Theology*, ii. 105) says that this expression seems to stand in peculiar contradiction to the high Christology of the epistle, and insists that it "cannot indicate that God is honoured by Christ as God, . . . but only that the God who has been manifest in Christ is spoken of." A true doctrine of the conditions of the Incarnate Life will remove all such difficulties.¹ In reference to the historical salvation wrought by Christ, the relations subsisting between the divine Persons are those of God and God's righteous Servant. In this sense, with respect to the working of the economy of grace, there is a veritable subordination on the part of the Son under the Father. As we have seen before, the Father is also in the relation of God to the Son as man's Redeemer.—The passage is here appropriately addressed to God under this name.—The apostle prays to God for benefits won by the obedience and sufferings of Him who, by yielding Himself

¹ Attempts have been made to get rid of the designation altogether, which Harless rightly says need only now be mentioned as curiosities. Some proposed to read "the God of glory," and to put "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" in a parenthesis; and others, by divers expedients, sought to reach the same rendering. Fear of Arian abuse of the phrase led Theodoret, and many other patristic and scholastic commentators, to restrict the application of the designation "God" to God's relation to Christ as Man, and that of "Father" to His relation to Christ as divine. But in that case the "glory" (δοξα) would have been distinctly characterised as Christ's. The Father is God of the Lord Jesus Christ in His full incarnate personality as the God-man.

to God as Servant, became thereby, as thus alone He could become, our Lord, with rightful and effective dominion over us, and Jesus Christ, our Saviour from sin and Communicator to us of the divine nature.

The Father of glory.—The explanation of this expression may be found in the sixth verse, where that which specially calls forth glory to God is identified with His grace, that grace which showed itself in the destination of the Son to be Saviour of the world. "He is the Father of glory," says Tertullian, "of whom Christ the King of glory sings in the twenty-fourth Psalm." Each stage in the work of Christ's salvation brings its tribute of glory to God. He who is thus glorified by His own eternal counsels of grace, by the redemption of the elect through the death of His Son, and by the continued work of the Holy Spirit; He to whose glory the three Persons of the Godhead contribute the undivided praise of all their gracious operations, is fitly called the Father of glory. He is, as Ewald says, "the Father who comprehends all glory in Himself" (*Old and New Testament Theology*, p. 280). The title is peculiarly suitable in this prayer, seeing that here, as in every genuinely Christian prayer, He is asked to carry on a work that will yield Him yet more glory. Though the precise title is not found elsewhere, it may be compared with the phrase, "The glory of the Father" (Rom. vi. 4). The Father is also called "The God of glory" (Acts vii. 2), and Christ "The Lord of glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8).

May give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Himself.—Here we have come to the substance of the prayer. The apostle characteristically asks, on behalf of the Ephesians, for gifts already possessed by them. God has abounded toward them in His grace, so that in them again wisdom and prudence have abounded (ver. 8), and the apostle's God-glorifying prayer is that in these things they may be made to abound more and more. It is the highest tribute to the divine grace and wisdom, that nothing new can be thought of or asked, but simply an increase of what He has been giving, or rather an increased capacity for receiving what is already enfolded in the gift bestowed.—The blessing man sought is wisdom, which is to be brought by the Spirit

and inwrought in the believers' hearts, so as to become a spiritual possession. Paul does not simply ask for God's wise Spirit. This is already present in the hearts of those Ephesian saints as the seal to them of their spiritual and eternal inheritance. But he asks that the divine wisdom may so identify itself with their spirit, that of their own spirit it may be said, that it is a wise spirit given them of God.—The apostle further prays that the Ephesian believers, having thus obtained the spiritual capacity, may also have that faculty granted them, whereby they shall be able to avail themselves of further revelations of spiritual truth. To those who have the spirit of wisdom God reveals the deep things of God (1 Cor. ii. 7, 10). It is evident that the spirit of revelation is just a particular instance of the spirit of wisdom, the same spirit exercised in a special department. So, in Rom. xi. 20, we read of the gifts and calling of God, though the calling is included among the gifts. Here the spirit of revelation is just the spirit of wisdom exercised upon the subjects of divine revelation, upon what is before described as the mystery of God's will.—The kind of wisdom gained by the spirit of revelation is further defined as the knowledge of God. This is the subject with which man's spirit, when enlightened by divine wisdom, concerns itself. The word here used (*ἐπίγνωσις*) means not simply knowledge (*γνῶσις*), but an exact, thoroughly accurate knowledge, a profound acquaintance with God. The contrast between the two kinds of knowledge is most strikingly expressed in 1 Cor. xiii. 12. What the apostle speaks of is no mere barren intellectual speculation about God, such as could be attained alongside of a practical acquaintance with the depths of Satan; but it consists in the directing of all the human faculties to God—intellect, heart, and will. In Col. i. 10, it is represented as the condition of all faithfulness and growth in the Christian life. The phrase is used very frequently in the epistles of the imprisonment (Phil. i. 9; Col. i. 9, 10; Philem. 6). The prominence given by the apostle to the contemplative aspect of the gospel, may be explained partly by his own circumstances as the prisoner of the Lord, an ambassador in bonds, and partly by the condition of the Church, where the simplicity of the word of truth, and

its efficiency as the gospel of revelation, were threatened by the speculative tendencies which were already manifesting themselves. Unable himself, by reason of his bonds, to continue, by the word of preaching, to build up the church at Ephesus, as he had done during a period of nearly three years, and aware of the presence of dangerous elements, even within the membership of the church (Acts xx. 29, 30), he asks on their behalf establishment and confirmation in saving knowledge.—The marginal rendering, “for the acknowledgment of Him,” is wrong. It is knowledge that is spoken of as profound acquaintance with One who had been acknowledged and recognised long before.—This knowledge is knowledge of God, yet only as conceived of by us and revealed to us as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the only aspect of the divine nature and Being in which we can have any adequate knowledge in Him. The highest attainment in knowledge, on the part of the perfect man, is knowledge of the Son of God (iv. 13). Apart from Christ, out of relation to our Lord Jesus Christ, God must still be the unknown God.

Ver. 18. *The eyes of your heart being enlightened.*—Enlightenment is an immediate result of the gift of the Spirit. The following clauses show what consequences again flow from this spiritual illumination.—The enlightenment is of the heart, not, as our Authorised Version puts it, of the understanding. The effect of the Spirit’s operations becomes apparent in our spirit, in a change wrought upon our nature. God gives us the spirit of wisdom, and our spirit becomes wise, and our whole being reflects the divine brightness. His presence in us is the creating in us of a new heart. The primary idea here is that of enlightenment, and this determines the use of the peculiar figure, nowhere else used, “the eyes of your heart.” It is the destination of the Christian to become light in the Lord. Now, if this is to be attained, care must be taken to have the light placed in a fitting situation. Compare Luke xi. 33–36; Matt. vi. 23, xv. 19. The heart is the innermost seat of the personal life. It is *in the heart* of the believer that Christ dwells (chap. iii. 17). Out of the heart are the issues of the natural life, and out of

it are the thoughts, and feelings, and desires which constitute the spiritual life. In the physical world its analogue is found in life and light. But here the apostle expressly sets aside, for his present purpose, consideration of the relation of the heart to life, and confines himself to its relation to light, by the use of his peculiar phrase, "*the eyes of your heart.*" The eyes of the heart, like the eyes of the body, are both receptive and reflective. As the eye takes in light, and when enlightened gazes upon objects in the light, so the eyes of the heart, having received light, exercise reflection upon those things brought by the Spirit of revelation within its range of vision. The figurative expression "blind eyes" was familiar to readers of the Old Testament, as occurring in Isa. vi. 10, xxix. 10; and very frequently the idea is also repeated in the New Testament, as in Acts xxvi. 18; Rev. iii. 17.—This spiritual enlightenment is always regarded as the work of the Holy Spirit. But, as it was said before, that God's Spirit makes man's spirit wise and capable of receiving revelations of truth, till it can be said of the believer that he has a spirit of wisdom and revelation, so here God's Spirit illumines man's spirit, gives vision to the eyes of his heart, till it can be said of the believer that he is light in the Lord. It is within the sphere of divine things, and spiritual experience in the knowledge of God, that such enlightenment is secured. It is quite in keeping with the use of the word in our text here used for enlightenment, which came afterwards to be applied to baptism. "So early as the time of Justin Martyr," says Hatch (*Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*), p. 295, 1890, "we find a name given to baptism, which comes straight from the Greek mysteries,—the name 'enlightenment' (*φωτισμός*). It came to be the constant technical term." Those being prepared for baptism were called *οἱ φωτιζόμενοι*, those who were being enlightened; and the baptised were called *φωτισθέντες*, the enlightened. The result of baptism, or that spiritual reality set forth by it, was enlightenment.

In three successive propositions, the apostle shows what the various attainments in knowledge are which the enlightened believer wins. The knowledge asked for is personal

experimental acquaintance with the great facts of the spiritual life. It is a familiar mode of expression in the apostle's writings. He desires "to know Christ," "to know the love of Christ;" and what he desires for himself he desires for his fellow-believers. Enlightenment of heart and mind springs out of that true and genuine knowledge of God (ver. 17), and leads up to a yet fuller knowledge of what God is to us in the fulness of that redemption (ver. 14), wrought for us in Christ by His Spirit. This knowledge is sought after in contemplation upon those three profound revelations of God's grace toward us in His calling, His inheritance, and His operations in and upon Christ as our Redeemer.

That ye may know what is the hope of His calling.—This is the first of the three positions.—The hope may be understood subjectively or objectively, either as a particular condition of soul, or as that which produces this condition and forms its objective basis. It may mean the emotion of hope, or it may mean the thing hoped for. But as the thing hoped for is distinctly the subject of the following clause, it seems better to understand hope here as meaning the emotion. The apostle desires that those who are exercising the graces of faith and love (ver. 15) may also exercise the grace of hope. It is a good thing to hope. It strengthens alike for doing and for enduring. Faith and love will languish if they be not sustained by the inspiring influence of hope.—God's calling is the calling wherewith He has called us who believe in Christ. It is a good and all-sufficient ground of hope. It is rightly called God's, though indeed it is ours, for it has its ground in God; and because it is His, it is sure. Our hope therefore is sure, just because the God of hope in His calling of us fills us, so as to make us abound in hope (Rom. xv. 13). This calling is God's invitation addressed to us, and the means which He takes for drawing men into the citizenship of His kingdom. It is the effectual calling of His Spirit,—the calling of God that is without repentance, the gospel offer from which He will not resile,—that gives us the right to exercise a hope which will be found a good hope through grace (2 Thess. ii. 16). It is only the spiritually enlightened,

in whom the Spirit of grace dwells, who can thus hope, and in proportion to the spirituality of a Christian will be the liveliness of the emotion of hope. Compare the precisely similar phrase, "the hope of the gospel" (Col. i. 23), the hopefulness inspired by the gospel, which is God's invitation and offer in His calling.

And what the riches of the glory of His inheritance among the saints.—The Christian ought to exercise a lively hope in regard to those blessings embraced in God's promise to the called, though not yet fully unfolded; but he ought also to strive after the possession of a present comforting knowledge of that inheritance which he now has in God, according to its extent and worth in riches and glory. This is the second theme on which the apostle would have the enlightened fix their attention.—There are here three points for consideration:—1. What and whose inheritance is here spoken of? It seems much better to understand it of the spiritual possession of believers, than of God's ownership of them. Thus the harmony is preserved between the present use of the word and its use in vers. 11 and 14, and in chap. v. 12; Col. i. 12, and, indeed, generally throughout the New Testament. This spiritual possession, as we have seen in ver. 11, if rightly understood, means God's presence in favour and communion, which, when perfectly enjoyed, constitutes heaven. The saint's inheritance is God, the only satisfying portion for man. He who is to have a goodly heritage must be able to say, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance." It is here called God's inheritance, either because believers obtain it as heirs of God, or simply because it is in Christ, who is God's. It is *His* inheritance, just as the calling of the previous clause is *His* calling. The saint's calling is of God, comes from God, and so the saint's inheritance is of God.—2. What is the force of the expression "the riches of the glory"? When we remember that the inheritance is God, we shall not wonder that the resources of human speech are overtaxed in the attempt to give adequate expression to the exceeding abundance and fulness of divine grace by which God's gift to us is characterised. Grace manifested is glory, and as thus abundantly manifested it is the wealth or riches of glory. The

word "riches" is altogether used five times in this epistle, and always of the grace of God and Christ. The Ephesians who believed and loved, knew the grace and the glory, and now the apostle prays that they may know more of the exceeding abundance of that grace. His desire is that God's Spirit, having enlightened their inner being, should direct their spiritually illumined powers to the attainment of a more adequate comprehension of their inheritance in God. He would have them made more fully acquainted with those inexhaustible stores of grace treasured up in Christ, who is God's fulness for us who are God's heirs. The God of glory is ours in Christ, and the riches of His glory are at our disposal. The abundance is inexhaustible, and our title is clear. The believing Ephesians had seen and known this heritage of theirs before, and now, with their improved vision, the apostle trusts that they may discover in it a wealth and fulness not hitherto perceived.—3. How should we understand the words "among the saints"? They simply mean that the inheritance is one which the Ephesian believers shall enjoy as fellow-heirs with all other saints. The saints are those consecrated and set apart for God as His possession. We must be among the saints, God's possessions, His inheritance, if He is to be our inheritance. We must be His, if He is to be ours. All His heritage, all His saints, are heirs to the inheritance. This thought would add to their spiritual strength. Hence the apostle on two occasions (Acts xx. 32, xxvi. 18), in the one case reporting our Lord's words of commission and encouragement to himself, in the other case himself giving encouragement to the Ephesian elders, emphasises the truth that the Christian's inheritance is held among all those who are sanctified, that is, among the saints.

Ver. 19. *And what the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe.*—This is the third particular which the apostle in prayer asks God to give to the enlightened saints as a subject for devout contemplation. The knowledge of the boundless power of Him whose heirs they are, is in the highest degree inspiring to those who believe in Christ. There is here a paradox, not unfamiliar to readers of Paul's epistles, inasmuch as the power exerted by God in the work of grace is in its

greatness immeasurable, surpassing calculation or expression, and yet the apostle prays that the Ephesians may know it (comp. chap. iii. 19). The divine power, though in its fulness unsearchable, may nevertheless be illustrated, and the contemplation of special instances of the forthputting of it will lead to its more adequate appreciation. Already the Ephesians have experienced it in themselves, as they have been enabled to believe, and to see the wondrous results of their faith, and if now they consider how great the power was which raised Christ from the dead, and think that this is the same power that is working upon them and in them as believers, they will have thus advanced to a truer conception of the greatness of God's power in grace. It is only by means of a due realisation of the greatness of God's power that the believer can firmly maintain his hope awakened by God's calling, consisting in his consciously grasping the riches of his spiritual heritage.

According to the working of the strength of His might.—Here we have not an exact measure of that power proposed; for the greatness of God's power passes all measure. We have simply a characteristic lingering over the thought of its exceeding greatness. "The working of the strength of His might" is a peculiar phrase, stately and impressive, fitted from its very construction to impress the reader's imagination with a sense of the hopelessness of any attempt at a specification of the divine power. God's might is omnipotence. The apostle here, by the accumulation of phrases, characterises that instance of power which he is about to cite as the most eminent exercise of that power.

SECT. IV.—DEVOTIONAL CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S POWER (Chap. i. 20–ii. 10).

It seems better to begin a new section here, though the apostle does not wait to make any grammatical pause. Up to this point the apostle has been reporting the substance of his prayers for the enlightenment of the Ephesians, but now he turns away from that to celebrate the great power of God. He introduces the contemplation of this great theme in direct

connection with the subject of his prayer, and is at no pains to mark the point of transition from prayer to doctrinal exposition. He has just shown what the subjects were on which he desired the Ephesian believers to be enlightened. He would have them enlightened in everything that would contribute to their more perfect knowledge of God. But for men the knowledge of God is possible only in Christ. And thus the apostle is led to expatiate on Christ and His redemption, in order to set forth the power of God in His work of grace toward us, in regard to which he desires that the Ephesians should be enlightened. There is no break at the end of the first chapter; but at the beginning of the second chapter, just as at the 20th verse of the first, there is a transition from one aspect of the theme to another. In chap. i. 20–23, the apostle shows how God's power has wrought upon Christ, in securing for Him and bestowing upon Him all the power which, as the risen and exalted Saviour, He possesses and exercises on our behalf. In chap. ii. 1–10, he shows how God's power has raised men out of such depths as those into which sin had brought them, and in order to intensify our conception of God's power, which has accomplished this, he gives a minute and detailed account of the depravity of sinful humanity, in order to lead up to the declaration that what was needed, and what God wrought for us, was a new creation in Christ Jesus. It is in the knowledge of all this that the apostle would have the Ephesians enlightened.

(1) *Of God's Power operating on Christ* (chap. i. 20–23).

Ver. 20. *Which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.*—Our Authorised Version is here particularly happy in rendering the verb by “wrought,” to correspond with the noun “the working” of the previous clause. This is the special instance of that working of divine power adduced by the apostle. This characteristic exercise of power, fitted to yield that knowledge of the divine might of grace for which the apostle prayed on behalf of the believers, was exercised “*in Christ.*” It is not said simply *on Christ*, but *in Christ* as our representative, so that wrought in Him

it is wrought in us. It is the resurrection of the race, the establishment of a resurrection kingdom under the rule of the risen King of men. It is the rising of the second Adam, in whom all His seed are also raised. The truth is most admirably and impressively set forth by Baldwin Brown in his *Risen Christ, the King of Men*, p. 168. In this Risen One alone can man fulfil the idea of his creation. "The resurrection is a further and essential stage in the development of the incarnation. By the incarnation the divine is born into the sphere of the human; by the resurrection the human is born into the sphere of the divine for ever." The power of God reveals its *exceeding greatness* as resurrection power. Paul prays that we may know this power. But according to the interpretation given of this profound signification of knowledge, as conceived of by the apostle, the knowledge of the resurrection power of God cannot be learnt in the schools. The content of that knowledge cannot be held as a mere speculative tenet, as a fact which we know from external evidence, of the objective truth of which we are intellectually convinced. To know this resurrection power of God is to experience it in ourselves. The reference of the apostle evidently is to our spiritual, and not to our bodily resurrection. That Christ's resurrection is the pledge of ours, is the truth set forth in 1 Cor. xv. 12-18. But in Rom. iv. 25, Christ's resurrection is regarded as the condition of our forgiveness and justification. So in Heb. iii. 20, 21, it is God, as He who raised Christ from the dead, that is appealed to on behalf of believers, to make them perfect in very good work. It is precisely in this sense that the apostle speaks in our text.¹ The power that raised Christ is that which works grace in us, accomplishes in us a spiritual resurrection. It is supremely comforting to the Christian to know from his own experience that in him that same power is working which wrought in Christ. This vital union subsists between Christ and the believer. That power of God which manifested the greatness of its might in preventing Christ from being held under the power of death, must work with like mightiness in us. To know, then, that Christ our life lives, is to know the power of God "to usward."

¹ See Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, ii. 695-697.

And set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places.—In the resurrection, Christ rose above death; in His ascension, He rose, not only above earth, but above all heavens to God's right hand. The relation to one another of Christ's humiliation, which ends with the state of death, and Christ's exaltation, which begins with rising again, and consists in sitting at God's right hand, is that of cause and effect, means and end. The humiliation is the condition of the exaltation. Christ's death gives occasion to the working of the strength of God's might. For the sitting at God's right hand of our Redeemer is something quite different from the position from eternity of the Son of God on God's throne. He now sits there as the God-man, the Son of Man, at God's right hand (Acts vii. 55), and the raising Him to that height is the crowning act of God's power which exhibits the exceeding riches of His grace. This exaltation, and the life into which it introduces the Risen One, marked an essential distinction between Christ's resurrection and that of those whom Christ Himself, during his earthly ministry, restored to life. These were restored to the same life which they had before, with all its conditions and limitations; but the ascension into the new life, as Lord of all, marks out Christ's resurrection as a unique manifestation of the unspeakably great power of God.¹ To know this working of God's power, to know the power of Christ's resurrection (Phil. iii. 10), is to know that the same power is working in us. The profound words of this epistle, "in Christ," everywhere either expressed or implied, secures the application of all that is said of Him to those that are in Him. All who are in Christ may reckon with confidence that the same exceeding power of God, which was exercised upon Christ to raise Him, will be exercised upon them to raise them out of the depths into heavenly places. It is the apostle's desire that his readers may know in themselves that this is true. "The heavenly places are the words, as we have seen, that describe the spiritual atmosphere in which saints, the heavenly-minded, have their being. We are not to think of God as removing His Son far from us. To be at

¹ This idea has been wrought out with remarkable force and beauty by Dale, in his *Lectures on Ephesians*, pp. 150-156.

the right hand of God is to share His divine attributes. To be alongside the omnipotent Jehovah is to "fill all in all," to be in contact with all things and all beings "in all places of His dominion." That Christ is raised to God's right hand, therefore, makes His presence with us as a spiritual power far more intimate and real.

Ver. 21. *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion.*—These four specific terms do not seem to be here used in reference to any particular grades or orders of being. The apostle does not speak here of different ranks, but simply names, under significant designations, the highest personal existences in the universe. There is no polemical allusion here, as there is in Col. i. 16, to the Gnostic heresies and their fantastic angelologies. The apostle simply seeks to express, in the most impressive way, the greatness of God's work in His exaltation of Christ.

These names seem to be set down in a regularly ascending order, in accordance with the argument which proceeds from the idea of a Christ just raised from the dead to that of a Christ seated at God's right hand. In Col. i. 16, again, which speaks of Christ's creation, first of things in heaven and then of things on earth, we have a reverse arrangement, where "*thrones*," indicating the cherubim, as immediate bearers of God's throne, and occupiers, according to the later Jewish theology, of the seventh heaven ("*Testam. xii. Patri*," in *Col. Ps. Vet. Test.*, ed. Fabric., p. 548), are named first, followed by the great angelic potentates or archangels, the *dominions*, and these again by the more subordinate "principalities and powers." We have to do only with the last three of the Colossian group, and with one class not mentioned in Colossians, designated here as "might" (*δύναμις*). Then again, in Colossians they are named in the plural as concrete existences, but here in the singular as abstract powers or qualities. In our passage they also seem to be intentionally grouped in pairs. The words constituting the first pair (*ἀρχὴ καὶ ἐξουσία*) occur together in the singular in Luke xx. 20, of the *rule* and *authority* of a governor; and in the plural in Luke xii. 11 and Titus iii. 1, of the rulers and authorities themselves. These two names are applied in chap. iii. 10 to

good angels, and in chap. vi. 12 to evil angels, but here probably to both without distinction. In so far as we use the two to describe classes of angelic beings, engaged in a similar form of service, the statement of Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 128, may be accepted as true: "The Apostle Paul calls the angels principalities and powers, and he thus describes them as reigning in certain definite departments of the economy of God, as rulers to whom different regions in the creation are subjected." We might describe them together as those superhuman beings to whom are assigned distinct provinces in the national and natural life, such as those designated in Dan. x. 13, 20, 21, as the princes of Persia and Greece, and especially in the rendering of Deut. xxxii. 8, in certain texts of the LXX.: "When the Most High divided the nations, when He dispersed the sons of Adam, He fixed the boundaries of the nations according to *the number of the angels of God*." This reading of the passage in Deuteronomy is defended by Lightfoot, *Clement of Rome*, ii. 94. So the Book of Jubilees, § 15, "Many are the nations, . . . and over all hath He set spirits as lords:" and Eccles. xvii. 17, "For in the division of the nations of the whole earth, He set a ruler over every people." They may be distinguished as respectively the executive and the governing officials, the "powers" being the princes, and the "principalities" being those under them carrying out their requirements. The terms used to indicate the second pair "might and dominion" (*δύναμις, κυριότης*) refer to angelic beings of a higher order, related to one another just as the former pair are. The *δυνάμεις* carry out the directions of the *κυριότητες*. Now we can have no difficulty in identifying the *κυριότητες* with the archangels, who in the later Jewish theology number seven, including Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, and Uriel (comp. Tob. xii. 15; Rev. i. 4, iv. 5, viii. 2). These are the highest angelic beings whose service has reference to man, so the *thrones* or cherubim are simply bearers of the divine throne, in attendance on God Himself.—We thus see in these four terms, as here arranged, a climax. Eadie refuses to see here a climax or anti-climax, and proposes an altogether different arrangement. The climax is reached in those archangels, dominions,

“dominations” (Milton). This is the climax of created being, but far above this is the uncreated Son in His ascent to the place of His glory.—See an admirable and sufficiently detailed treatment of Pauline angelology in Klöpper, *Colossians*, pp. 227–237, 1882.

And every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.—The apostle has just mentioned the very highest order of created being. But should it be conceivable that in any other order of things a yet nobler race should emerge, over it also will Christ stand immeasurably exalted. His name is above every name (Phil. ii. 9); He has obtained a more excellent name than they (Heb. i. 4). Christ’s supremacy over all forms of being is absolute.—By declaring that this supremacy of Christ is not restricted to the present order of things, the apostle proclaims the truth that it lasts for ever. It matters not how world-periods succeed one another, amid all their changes Christ’s position remains unchanged.

Ver. 22. *And put all things under His feet.*—This statement is borrowed from Ps. viii. 6, as in 1 Cor. xv. 27. The primary application of the Old Testament utterance is to man as he came from the Creator’s hand. This was man’s destiny; but the entrance of sin prevented its realisation. And it was to this position that God’s power raised the Christ who died. In His death He subdued His enemies, and in His new life He exercises the mastery over them. Thus man’s dominion over the creatures (Ps. viii. 6) passes over into the God-man’s dominion over the powers of the spiritual world that had opposed themselves (Ps. cx. 1). Our text speaks primarily of supreme dominion; but, as that authority is challenged, it involves the overthrow and subjugation of the rebels.—The actual sovereignty of our Redeemer is the direct result of the exaltation to God’s right hand. The previous expressions which state the fact of that exaltation plainly indicate, as Goodwin points out, the personal worth and excellency of Christ, which is the real ground of His dominion over all things. “The humanity of Jesus,” says Pulsford, “is raised to the supreme throne, because it has acquired the highest virtues and powers. It is *raised* above all, because it is above

all." Being thus in personal character worthy of the highest official position, and having worthily finished the work of His state of humiliation, He is now raised to that place from which He may discharge the duties of His office as the Risen and Glorified One. "That regeneration," says Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 318, "which mankind and all creation look forward to as the consummation of the world's development, in which spirit and body, nature and history, are perfectly reconciled, human nature being glorified into a temple for the Holy Ghost, and material nature being brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, is revealed ideally in the resurrection of the Lord. The resurrection of the Lord is not the mere *sign* of that regeneration, it is itself the actual *beginning*. . . . Now that the perfecting of the world is in His person ideally accomplished, He becomes the actual Perfecter of the world, and can replenish this present world with the energies of the future." He has been raised to the place where such power can be put forth, and that place is God's right hand, and being there "He must reign," and so long as there are enemies to subdue that rule must be exercised in putting all things under His feet. In contrast to what follows, therefore, this clause naturally refers to Christ's victorious conflict over opposing powers.

And gave Himself to be Head over all things to the Church, (ver. 23) *which is His body.*—The apostle's special interest, in connection with the main theme of his epistle, is not with the great and blessed truth of our Lord's universal dominion, but more particularly with the thought that His lordship is exercised in fulness of power in and for His Church. He who is the centre of the universe is Head of the Church.—God's act is the bestowing of a gift at once upon the Church in giving her Christ as her Head, and upon Christ in giving Him the Church to be Head over it. As this statement still forms part of the apostle's report of his prayer on behalf of the Ephesians, which had in view an increase of their spiritual knowledge, his twofold reference of the gift to Christ and to the Church must be here maintained. Members of the Church will know the power of this truth as it is first realised in Christ the Head, and then throughout His

mystical body. Christ is enriched by the gift, and His enrichment is that also of His people.—As exalted to God's right hand, with all things under His feet,—that is, as absolutely supreme in the universe,—He belongs to the Church. All things were put under Him, and then, as possessor of all this undisputed authority and power, He is given by the Father as Head of the Church. It is the privilege of the Church to have as its Head this infinitely exalted and sovereign potentate. It is expressly in His capacity as "Head over all," Head over the universe, that He is given to the Church.—The question may naturally be raised, Why does not Christ exercise His universal authority, by bringing all into His Church, so that His victory might consist not in the destruction of any, but in the salvation of all? The best answer to this is reference to the character and quality of that power which Christ exercises. His reign is one of reason and will, not of constraint and violence. He is King over those only who *will* have Him to reign over them.¹ The Church is called "His body" in order to show that this Headship of Christ is not like that of a ruler over his people, but that it is one which implies a vital union, like that of the head with the body. The name as applied to the Church is most characteristic and suggestive. As Head of the Church, Christ gives it guidance and life in its highest form. "The head," says Hooker, "being of all other parts of the body most divine, hath dominion over all the rest; it is the fountain of sense, of motion; the throne where the guide of the soul doth reign; the court from whence direction of all things human proceedeth." As Head of the Church, Christ determines its doctrine by His teachings, He prescribes its ordinances, and appoints and commissions its officers. These are the "all things" in and through which He exercises His Headship over the Church. In 1 Cor. xii. 12, which speaks of the divinity of members and their unity in the body, we have "the Christ" where we would have expected "the Church." The body is there regarded as the collective designation of all the members of the body, and the Christ is regarded as the collective designation of all the members

¹ Compare Bruce, *Training of the Twelve*, 2nd ed., p. 440, 1877.

of the Church. Christ is the representative Head of redeemed humanity. He can be distinguished from members of His body as their Head, but He is necessarily included along with them when they are collectively called His body. They are *His* body, in the sense that they are the body of which He is the Head. Together they form one organism, which embraces not only the other several members, but also the Head. What Rothe (*Still Hours*, p. 246) says of the individual Christian, "The creature will become divine, *i.e.* made essentially of the same nature as God, but it will not be deified, *i.e.* will not be made identical with Him," may be likewise said of the Church in its relation to Christ. When the Church is viewed as an organism, there must be assumed a sameness of nature between the Head and the members, but the functions of the Head distinguish it at once from the members collectively constituting the body, and from all the several members.

The fulness of Him that filleth all with all.—Christ's body, the Church, is more exactly defined as His fulness (πλήρωμα). The *pleroma* here means that which is filled. Meyer quotes classical passages to show that not only the cargoes which fill ships, but also the ships themselves which are filled with them, are called πληρώματα. The meaning of the word and its usage have been thoroughly discussed by Lightfoot, *Colossians*, pp. 257–273, 1880. It is shown to be absolutely certain that substantives of this form, that is, in μα, are invariably passive, and that wherever we connect πλήρωμα with πληροῦν, in the sense of "to fill" rather than "to fulfil," we must translate "that which is filled." Lightfoot, however, insists upon deriving the substantive from the verb in its sense of fulfils, so as to make it mean "the complement." "The fulness of Him" is thus made to mean "that by which He is filled," that which forms His complement. Lightfoot indeed distinguishes two senses in which the word complement may be used: (1) the full set, (2) what must be added to make complete. He adopts the former sense, and as thus understood the rendering of *pleroma* in our text comes practically to mean the sum of those graces which Christ imparts to His Church, by the possession of which the

Church is filled or has her fulness. Now it is in accordance with Scripture doctrine to say "of His fulness have we received" (John i. 16); but to say we are His fulness, or the Church is His fulness, as though it were a matter of equivalence, has no support in Scripture usage. It can only be said, we are filled by His grace; that which constitutes our fulness, that whereby we are filled, is His grace. The other sense of complement, as that which is needed to make complete, is simply equivalent to the active meaning of *pleroma*, which Lightfoot declares to be in every case grammatically unallowable. As thus understood, *pleroma* means that which fills. Harless maintains that invariably *pleroma* has this active signification; and many distinguished interpreters, such as Chrysostom, Theophylact, Calvin, Beza, have understood the phrase in the same or in a very similar sense. This is also the rendering of Baur and Schwegler, who seek to identify the conception of *πλήρωμα* in our epistle and in the Gnostic systems. Weiss, *Theology of the New Testament*, ii. 113, speaks of the apostle as in our verse venturing on "the bold expression that Christ also needs the Church, as the body, as that which belongs to His completeness, makes His being just quite complete." But if we thus understand the word, we shall give an extremely strained and unnatural rendering of the passage. If we take the *pleroma* as signifying "the complement," that which is required to fill up, to give fulness to Him that filleth all in all, we have a paradox of an exceedingly harsh description. If, on the other hand, we understand the *pleroma* to mean "that which is filled," we bring the phrase into harmony with similar expressions in this epistle and in that to the Colossians, and we obtain a thoroughly sober and self-consistent statement of that truth which the apostle has been labouring to unfold. See the admirable exposition of this clause, where the terms are carefully analysed, in Von Soden, *Hand-Commentar*, iii. 1, pp. 111, 112.—There is also a noticeable parallelism between the use of the idea of the Head in the former clause and that of the fulness here. He who is Head over all is Head to the Church, and He who filleth all filleth the Church. The members of the Church, which is His body, say, "Of His

fulness have we received." By the knowledge of the love of Christ, they become filled with the fulness of God.—The use of the middle voice, *πληρουμένου*, serves to indicate the nature of that filling which results from His presence. He fills with Himself. "I will come in to Him" (Rev. iii. 20). It is His own fulness that fills. It is of the nature of His grace to fill man's soul as nothing else can do; empty till it receives Him, but then filled. Such filling again can result only in the case of those who receive Him. He stands at the door and knocks till the door is opened, and then He goes in and fills the soul. Those who receive Him become members of His body, and then His indwelling presence, the influence issuing from the Head, yields increase in every part.¹

(2) *Of God's Power operating in the Believer* (chap. ii. 1–10).

Vers. 1–10. *Connection and Contents*.—This new portion is closely connected with that immediately preceding. The subject of the apostle's devotional meditation, into which he

¹ Meyer, *Commentary on Ephesians and Philemon*, pp. 82–88, Edin. 1880, in his usual clear and masterly way, insists upon the rendering of *pleroma* by "that which is filled." He then enumerates in detail seven different conflicting interpretations of our passages that have been proposed, each of them supported more or less by famous and capable exegetes. Meyer also very concisely states his objections to each of those varying modes of interpretation. In his essay on "The Gospel of the Creation" in his *Commentary on Epistles of St. John*, p. 309, Lond. 1883, Westcott expresses himself in favour of taking *πληρουμένου* as passive.—By far the ablest and most elaborate attempt to establish the other rendering of the word *pleroma* is made by Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, ii. 172–176, Lond. 1877. His contention is that Colossians and Ephesians must have proceeded from different authors, that apparently Colossians was used by the writer of Ephesians, but that its ideas were modified by him by having new terms and applications given them, and by having its words and phrases often used in entirely different senses. This he illustrates at some length from the use of the word *pleroma* in Colossians and in Ephesians. In Colossians, Pfleiderer maintains, *pleroma* has a constant meaning given it. There it always means "that which is filled." But in Ephesians its meaning fluctuates. He thinks that Eph. i. 22 evidently refers to Col. i. 18, 19; but while in Colossians *pleroma* signifies "that which is filled," in Ephesians it signifies "the filling up, the completing" of Him who filleth all in all. So again, in the related passages, Col. ii. 9 and Eph. iii. 19, we have in the one case a dogmatical declaration, and in the other an ethical ideal. See a fuller discussion of this question in my article, "The use of the word *Pleroma* in Ephesians and Colossians," in *Expositor*, 2nd Series, iv. 462–472.

passes while reporting to the Ephesians the contents of his prayer on their behalf, without any formal intimation of his change of theme, is the power of God exercised toward us. The manifestation of this power is directed, first of all, to Christ, and in vers. 20-23 of the first chapter, as we have seen, the apostle shows how God had given expression to the power in Christ, by raising Him from the dead and exalting Him to the place of supreme power in the universe and over the Church. He has already indicated, in ver. 19, that this power was "to usward who believe;" and now, after dwelling upon the instances of God's power in His operation in Christ, he resumes his statement regarding the ultimate destination of this work of God's power. The thought of the opening verses of the second chapter is thus immediately connected with that of the 19th verse of the preceding chapter. The grammatical connection is more difficult. Harless and some others have regarded the relation between the first verse of the second chapter and the last verse of the first chapter as so intimate, that they have felt warranted in removing the full stop from the end of the first chapter and substituting a simple comma.¹ But, as Meyer rightly remarks, had the connection been so close as this, we must have had "us" and not "you" in the continuation of the sentence. The change from the first person to the second indicates the beginning of a new period, in which the apostle calls upon his readers to consider that this wonderful exhibition of God's power in Christ is of direct and personal interest to themselves.—In order to heighten their appreciation of the riches of divine grace, in this forthputting of His power on their behalf, the apostle introduces a digression which breaks up the construction of his sentence. He desires to impress his hearers with a due sense of the greatness of God's work in them, from a consideration of what had to be done in order to raise them

¹ Not very different from this is the view of Monod, *Explication de L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, p. 71, Paris 1867: "One single idea reigns from i. 15 to ii. 10, and we may say one single sentence down to the end of the seventh verse. That is the first place where we can insert a full stop, according to our ordinary system of punctuation. At the end of i. 19 there ought to have been a simple comma, and at the end of the first chapter a semicolon."

to such heights. Even before, in introducing the verb which shall indicate the nature of God's work on the subject of His grace, the apostle gives, in vers. 1-3, an elaborate description of the condition and manner of life of man out of Christ. Then, in vers. 4-7, he reconstructs his sentence in resuming his main theme. So far as the logical development of the apostle's thought is concerned, vers. 1-3 might be thrown into a parenthesis, and ver. 4 immediately joined to i. 23. What God really had in view was our quickening, resurrection, and spiritual exaltation. This was indeed indispensable to us, seeing that we were dead in sins, but it could be accomplished for us only by Christ taking His place alongside of us as we lay under the curse, and taking us up with Him through the successive stages of quickening, resurrection, and exaltation, all of which we can experience and enjoy only together with Him. All this, which is now in process of accomplishment, will, when finished in the future perfected kingdom of God, prove the most glorious exhibition of the riches of divine grace. And finally, by way of supplement, in vers. 8-10, he enlarges upon the thought already present, that all this in us is wholly of God, that the believer owes all to God, and most distinctly that new nature and disposition from which proceed those good works, the performance of which on our part is part of God's eternal plan.

Ver. 1. *And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*—The apostle uses the figure dead, to characterise the condition of man out of Christ. In this connection, too, death is the wages of sin. He does not speak of man's liability to death. It is not said that a sentence is pending, but that sentence has been passed and executed. The apostle does not say that men are dead, and that they continue in the state of death simply because their present life is a sinful one. For the death of which he speaks is spiritual death. The powers and inclinations of man are dead, so far as activity in the direction of God and holiness is concerned. But this is conceived of as evidence of a judicial sentence. It is not said here to consist in, but to result from, sinning. The soul that sins dies. It is sin that kills.—No real distinction can be insisted upon here between the word trespasses (*παραπτώματα*)

and sins (*ἁμαρτίαι*). Attempts have been made to distinguish those two words. Jerome supposed *παραπτώματα* to be sinful suggestions occurring to the mind, more or less acquiesced in and welcomed; *ἁμαρτίαι* to be those inclinations developed into overt acts. Augustine defined the former as sins of omission or sins of ignorance and rashness; the latter as sins actually or knowingly committed. Olshausen thinks that *ἁμαρτίαι* denote not decidedly sinful deeds, like *παραπτώματα*, but rather sinful movements of the soul in desires and words. Eadie suggests a reference in *παραπτώματα* to the desires of the flesh, and in *ἁμαρτίαι* to the desires of the mind. But it is clear that in Scripture *παράπτωμα* cannot be thus restricted. Of the best known writers on New Testament synonyms, Tittmann distinguishes the words very much in the style of Augustine; while Trench, *Synonyms*, p. 247, denies any real difference between them, and calls attention to the equivalence of the two in Heb. vi. 6 (*παρῃψεσών*) and Heb. x. 26 (*ἁμαρτανών*). Etymologically, the words are almost identical in their meaning, indicating as they do, in the one case, falling by the side of, and, in the other, missing the mark. As Fritzsche says of *παράπτωμα* and *ἁμάρτημα*, they differ "in figure not in force," and, as we may see, the difference in figure is not material. The use of the two words in our verse may be regarded as an instance of rhetorical reiteration for the sake of emphasis. In Rom. v. 20 our two words are used in practically the same sense, for the one sin of Adam, and the many sins of his descendants, are regarded simply as similar acts of disobedience to a divine command.

Ver. 2. *Wherein in time past ye walked*.—This phrase describes the sphere in which those out of Christ live. They are dead to God and holiness, but alive and active in the service of sin and Satan. Those trespasses and sins which have killed the soul form the sphere, mark out the range within which, to continue the paradox, the dead soul lives and moves. Walking indicates a continued operation and permanent state. It may also suggest the idea of voluntariness, the absence of constraint and compulsion. Inclination goes so much in the same direction, that those who are out of Christ confine themselves within the limits of the prescribed range, without any

consciousness of effort. No further proof of spiritual deadness is needed than the fact of such a walk.—Those who thus walk have placed themselves under the direction of two guides, essentially and ultimately one, yet here distinguished.

According to the course of this world.—Thus does the apostle designate the first guide of the natural man. The word “course” (αἰών) is usually rendered “age.” Its original meaning was duration, a course or period of time, *e.g.* a life-time. Then it obtained a wider and less definite application to any long period, and, by and by, to a period of unlimited or undefined duration. In the New Testament it is employed to denote a dispensation in the wide sense of the term, and, when particularised by the addition of “this” (οὗτος), or “to come” (μέλλων), must be rendered “this world or age,” “the world or age to come.” These terms were applied respectively to the period that ends at the last judgment, and to the period that follows that great crisis. But as allusions were made to this distinction of ages, usually in order to call attention to the diverse moral characteristics by which they were distinguished from one another, the phrase “this world” or “this age” came to mean a period of moral corruption or depravity, of estrangement from and enmity toward God: while the phrase “the world or age to come” indicates the period of moral perfection and heavenly piety. Hence the word which had primarily a reference simply to time and duration, and so was rendered “age,” came to have a reference to the moral condition of those living in that age, and so was appropriately enough rendered “course.” So completely does this spiritual meaning of the phrase take the place of the earlier literal and temporal sense, that instead of the contrast of “this world” and “the world to come,” we get rather that of “this world” and Christ’s kingdom that is not of “this world,” and yet is even here and now set up in the world and is drawing men into it.—In our text, indeed, “this” is joined to “world” (κόσμος) and not to “course” (αἰών). But these two words form one phrase, which the definite pronoun “this” serves to particularise as the present fashion of the world, which is enmity against God. It is in accordance with “this world’s” course, this world’s code of maxims and

rules, that the man dead in trespasses and sins regulates and orders his walk and conversation. This "course" varies from age to age, and is modified, in regard to details, by surrounding circumstances; but it is always true to the essential characteristics of the world which is alienated from God, and stands in opposition to His law of holiness.—This "*course of the world*" is that according to which the Ephesians had in time past walked. Just as there are laws and ordinances of God ever green in the hearts of men, or written in the book which is the recognised rule and standard for the guidance of those who fear God, so there are maxims and precepts deduced from the corrupt customs of worldly society, and from the wicked practices of godless men, which have come to constitute a code of laws for the regulation and direction of the men of the world. As the phrase is immediately associated with the following clause, we may admit that the apostle here approaches somewhat toward the conception of a personal *Aeon*, a spiritual being whose thought and feeling are expressed in the moral and spiritual tendencies of the present age. Thus the way is prepared for the clause that follows. But this is something very different from the elaborate and systematised *Aeon*-doctrine even of the earlier Gnostics. The parallel is rather with chap. i. 21 than with the following clause.

According to the prince of the power of the air.—Thus does the apostle designate the other guide of the life of the natural man. We have suggested a comparison between the course of the world in relation to the worldly, and the sacred Bible in relation to the godly; and here we may compare the prince of the power of the air, as the natural man's guide, with the Holy Spirit of God as the guide of the believer.—The name here given to the arch-enemy is peculiar. Taking the phrase as a whole, it reminds us of various similar phrases used in the New Testament Scripture. The rank of prince is given to Satan very generally, with the addition of certain defining and qualifying terms. He is the prince of demons (Matt. ix. 34, xii. 24, etc.); prince of the world, of all that is not in sympathy with God (John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11). In the Ignatian Epistle to the Ephesians, xix. 1, and to the

Magnesians, i. 6, he is called the prince of this age or course of things (ὁ ἀρχὸν τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου). The prince of darkness was the name given by Manichæus to the God of the Jews as the primal source of evil.—The close connection between this prince and ourselves appears in this, that his domain is that element by which we are closely surrounded. It is, indeed, the lower and denser atmosphere, yet not to be rendered darkness, which is the ultimate abode of devils. It is the atmosphere of death in which the dead walk.¹ This domain of the prince of evil is lower than heaven and higher than the earth. Such a region befits the hosts of the spiritual ruler. While under divine control and subservient to His will, so that they share not in the attributes of Deity—omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, etc.—they are superior to man in that they are not restrained by the trammels of sense and matter. Their being, however, is represented as something unsubstantial—that is, always craving for a fulness that can be obtained only by entrance into the being of some other creature; if out of man, then they will rather enter into the unclean swine than go forth into dry and empty places.²—Their “power” (ἐξουσία) is not only exercised in the air, in the region above and around the earth, but it is of a character corresponding to the atmosphere in which they live and move. They are not pure spirits, but spirit-like as the wind is, and are then described as possessed of a certain physical element. See Hahn, *Die Theologie des New Testament*, p. 327. So Belial is styled in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Levi, chap. iii.), τὸ ἀἔριον πνεῦμα. Yet undoubtedly it is the locality rather than the character and being of pure evil spirits that is intended to be made pro-

¹ “Without any perceptible noise or effort, you breathe the air and live thereby; but more noiselessly, without awaking the slightest suspicion of their presence, designing spirits enter your souls, kindle desire, and lead forth thought according to their will” (Pulsford, *Christ and His Seed*, p. 52).

² Martensen, *Dogmatics*, pp. 186–203, presents a singularly rich and suggestive, yet soberly speculative account of superhuman evil. “The demons lie in wait continually for the opportunity to return again to the world of man, and to set up their abode there. Or they remain in the air (Eph. ii. 2) in the undetermined, unformed element; and this mode of expression shows that, apart from the world of man, they have only an empty being” (p. 196). Comp. Dörner, *System of Doctrine*, iii. 91.

minent here. The Book of Enoch, chap. xv. 10–11, places the spirits of giants and demons in the clouds. Comp. also, Philo, *De Gigantibus*, i. 263; *Ascensio Isaie*, vii. 9, x. 29–31, in which the *firmament* is described as the dwelling-place of the chief demon Sammaël, and a region of demonic strife. Origen, also, *Echortatio ad Martyrium*, chap. xlv., places the demons in the heavy atmosphere around the earth, where they subsist upon the vapour rising from the blood and incense of heathen offerings. This general idea of the location of the demons in the immediate proximity of the earth and man, is common to Pythagoreanism, later Judaism, and early Christianity. See this clause admirably and fully discussed in Everling, *Die Paulinische Angelologie und Dämonologie*, pp. 105–109, 1888.—How Paul came upon this conception has been much debated. Dale and other popular expositors have adopted, apparently without much consideration, the opinion of Meyer, that the apostle carried this conception over from his pre-Christian Jewish rabbinic circle of ideas into the contents of his Christian belief. Ellicott, Harless, Olshausen rightly reject this supposition. In the writings of the rabbis, we have no settled and generally accepted consistent theory on the subject, but only the vaguest and wildest conceivable fancies and gross superstitions.¹ Meyer, indeed, claims only that Paul took from the rabbis the name for the prince of the world; but from what we have said above, there seems no need to assume even this.—The *power* in the air over which this prince rules is the whole aggregate of demonic beings within the prescribed domain. The same word (ἐξουσία) is used in Col. i. 13 in the phrase “the power of darkness,” where it is evidently placed in opposition to “the kingdom of God’s dear Son.” The “*power*,” we might say, precisely means here authority or magisterial jurisdiction, the magistracy collectively or as a whole, the host of beings who wield authority in that region ruled over by the prince of this world.

Of the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.
—The genitive “of the spirit” is most naturally governed by “the prince” of the preceding clause. Some prefer to make

¹ Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, ii. 437.

the new clause one purely of apposition, by supposing that the apostle would have said "the spirit" in correlation to "the prince," but for the attraction of the preceding genitives. It would then read, "The prince who is the spirit," etc. It seems better to take "of the spirit" as governed by "the prince," and to read, "The prince of the spirit which worketh," etc. In this case we must understand "the spirit" in a generic sense, as that spiritual influence or set of influences which operates in the disobedient. The prince there is the active organiser and promoter of all influences and impulses working in the souls of man against God and holiness. The disobedient are thus described as under the dominion of evil spirits.—The word disobedience (*ἀπειθεία*) is not mere unbelief, but an aggravated and obtrusive result of it. This is its meaning in all the New Testament passages in which it occurs (Rom. xi. 30, 32; Heb. iv. 6, 11; Eph. ii. 2, v. 6). It is unbelief in opposition to the gracious purpose and word of God. See Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon*, p. 476, 1878. It implies obstinacy in evil, and determined refusal to extinguish it. The prince of the power of the air makes it his end and aim to work in all his subjects this spirit of defiance and persistent opposition against God.

Ver. 3. *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past.*—The apostle now gives to his statement the most general application. Without thinking specially of the distinction of Jews and Gentiles, he simply says that all men, without exception, had their place among the sons of disobedience. All those who are now believers had been originally in the same state of condemnation. He speaks here of the personal character and conduct of those who are under the dominion of the prince of the power of the air. "We all had our conversation" (*ἡμεῖς πάντες ἀνεστράφημέν*) means precisely, "We all behaved or conducted ourselves among the children of disobedience," i.e. our conduct or manner of life was the same as theirs.

In the lusts of our flesh.—The word lust (*ἐπιθυμία*) is of very frequent occurrence in the writings of St. Paul. It means everywhere a strong, urgent craving for what is forbidden. In other passages, as well as in the words before us,

it is used in the plural, with a genitive of that which excites the sinful longing. So he speaks, iv. 22, of lusts of deceit (ἐπιθυμίαι τῆς ἀπάτης); Gal. v. 16, lust of the flesh (ἐπιθυμία σαρκός).¹ The word *flesh* (σάρξ) is often used for the soft material substance that covers the bones in the human body, and is thus used to define the body (σῶμα) as material, when referred to in a natural and not a mystical sense. Comp. τὸ σῶμα τῆς σαρκός (Col. i. 22). While, therefore, we can apply the designation of the body of Christ mystically to the Church, we can use *flesh* (σάρξ) only of the natural body of his incarnation. When used in an ethical sense, the word *flesh*, as both Luther and Melancthon clearly perceived, is to be understood of the entire nature of man, apart from God's Holy Spirit, embracing the soul and the moral and intellectual faculties as well as the body. In illustration of this, Grimm, in his *Lexikon*, p. 571, under the word Σάρξ, calls attention to the two precisely similar statements of Paul, 2 Cor. vii. 5, "our flesh had no rest;" and 2 Cor. ii. 13, "I had no rest in my spirit."² Here, however, the ethical idea is not present, and even had it been so the case supposed is that of a spiritual man. It nevertheless fairly indicates how "the flesh" is generally conceived of in the New Testament diction. In its ethical use it is practically equivalent to "the natural man." As Weiss, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, ii. 77, says, "The natural σάρξ is human nature untouched by grace in general, and in this sense it is the seat of sin." By the use of the phrase "our flesh," the apostle makes his reference to fallen human nature

¹ Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon*, p. 288, 1878, seems to me to be right in saying that, as in classical Greek, the moral character of the ἐπιθυμία is determined by its subject, if only we remember that it has, in all cases where it is used in an ethical sense, that one subject, the fleshly heart at enmity with God. Hence, where used absolutely, it invariably means a simple lust.

² See Delitzsch, *Biblical Psychology*, pp. 433-459, esp. 439 f., Edin. 1860; Beck, *Biblical Psychology*, pp. 20-21, Edin. 1877; Laidlaw, *The Biblical Doctrine of Man*, pp. 74 ff., 373 f., Edin. 1879; Dickson, *St. Paul's Use of the terms Flesh and Spirit*, Glas. 1883; Pfeiderer, *Paulinism*, pp. 47-67, Lond. 1877; Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, pp. 268-275, 10th ed., Lond. 1886; Holsten, *Zum Evangelium des Paulus und Petrus*, Rostock 1867, in a special section on the signification of the word Σάρξ in the doctrinal system of Paul, pp. 365-447.

as wide as possible, comprehending what is hidden and what is manifest, what affects the higher parts of the nature, as well as what affects the lower, both carnal and spiritual sins.

Fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and of the mind.—The change of phraseology in this new clause is brought out in the Revised Version by the use of a synonym for lusts: “doing the desires (*θελήματα*) of the flesh and of the mind.” We have met with this word already (i. 11), where we have seen that it means the execution of a decision arrived at, or a counsel thoroughly matured and deliberated upon, so as to be ready for execution. Here it means an imperious will urging vehemently to action.—The distinction is here made between desires of the flesh and desires of the mind (*διάνοια*). By the use of both terms, “flesh” and “mind,” the apostle emphasises the fact that the whole nature of man, higher as well as lower, is under the dominion of powerful impulses in a God-ignoring or a God-defying direction. It is the will of the flesh as that of human nature, uninfluenced by God’s Spirit, that is being carried out, and to this end all the parts of man’s being contribute. The term “flesh” in the present clause has thus a narrower meaning than in the previous clause. It is here used to indicate the sensuous side of man’s fallen nature, as mind is used to indicate the spiritual side of that nature. Both are under the same dominion of sin, and together constitute that natural life in the flesh which is enmity against God. The mind (*διάνοια*) is the faculty of reflection intellectual and moral, the organ which receives and expresses moral impulse, and as such it is capable of enlightenment and of darkening (i. 18, iv. 18). But the saving grace of God in Christ is that which alone can enlighten it. Under the reign of sin it is darkened, and while this reign continues it does itself contribute to the intensifying of that darkness. All the reformed confessions and catechisms teach, in strict accordance with the divine Word, that the very highest powers of man are not only enfeebled, but also defiled by sin.—It is not necessary to supply “evil” before “thoughts,” as Ellicott suggests, nor with Delitzsch (*Biblical Psychology*, p. 219), to do violence

to the construction by saying that the thoughts (*διάνοια*), like the lusts (*θελήματα*), are determined by the flesh. The thoughts are evil thoughts, and they are determined by the flesh in the wider sense of that word, as explained above; but the evil of those thoughts results from this, that the desires which dominate them are the desires of the corrupt fallen nature of man.

And were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest.—The apostle here simply states explicitly what is already implied in his previous utterances. In the previous part of the verse the apostle had declared the universal fact of sin as shown in its fruits, here he discovers the cause of that universality in the possession of a common corrupt fallen nature. The possession of such a nature makes us objects of the divine displeasure. If we join together the words *τέκνα ὀργῆς* they can have but one meaning, “objects of God’s wrath.”—We might almost have proceeded on the assumption that this combination of the words was universally accepted, but another combination has been suggested and commended, with such ingenuity and plausibility, as deserves and will amply repay consideration. Ernesti¹ asserts that the words *τέκνα φύσει* should be joined and understood as a parenthetical clause, “though by nature children.” The statement would then be one in itself perfectly scriptural and unobjectionable, that sonship belonged to the Jews in virtue of the covenant made with their forefathers. But when *ἡμεθα ὀργῆς* is rendered “we were objects of wrath,” it is evident that some such term as *τέκνα* must be supplied. In that case we introduce again the term which we had surrendered for use in another connection, and this recognised need of it here is a valid argument against such a surrender. We also

¹ Ernesti, *Der Ursprung der Sünde nach Paulinischen Lehrgehalte*, Gött. 1862. His theory has met with general disfavour. It is discussed and rejected by Meyer in his commentary on this passage, by Philippi, *Kirchliche Glaubenslehre*, iii. 217–219, Stuttgart 1867; and by Müller, *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, ii. 279, Edin. 1868; Davies, *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon*, speaks of the rendering of *ὀργῆς* by “animal impulse” as a tempting interpretation, *τίκνα ὀργῆς* “children of ungoverned impulse,” but feels obliged to dismiss it as at variance with Paul’s habitual use of the word, as in v. 6, with reference to the wrath of God because of sin.

find ourselves obliged to interject here the idea of adoption in antithesis to that of natural descent, in a manner absolutely opposed to the Pauline use of the idea, as illustrated by Rom. ix. 4. Besides, the introduction of the parenthesis in question is extremely awkward, and should be resorted to only if the construction absolutely required it. On the contrary, the general drift of the context evidently suggests the combination, not of *εἶναι ὀργῆς* but of *τέκνα ὀργῆς*, children of wrath, objects of the divine displeasure. This is how any one would naturally read apart from a strong doctrinal prepossession.—Another curious combination calls for consideration. When the combination suggested by Ernesti has been set aside, there is still one possible alternative remaining to set against the one commonly received. When the question is put as to whose wrath is spoken of by the apostle, all commentators, with one exception, answer, God's wrath. Holzhausen (*Der Brief an die Epheser übersetzt und erklärt*, 1883) understands this wrath as proceeding from man's corrupt nature against God. He regards nature (*φύσις*) as meaning the natural life, making it thus synonymous with the flesh in the sense of the life of man, apart from God's Spirit. It has been shown conclusively by Harless (p. 174), and Meyer (p. 106) that *φύσις* does not bear this meaning, that if it did it would still have required the article, which is wanting in the text, and that the only translation which even Holzhausen's examples allow would be "wrath pertaining to the nature, or inborn wrath." This combination being rejected, as well as that of Ernesti, we are in a position to reaffirm the traditional grouping of the words, "by nature children of wrath," by nature objects of the divine displeasure.

The main battle is waged over the meaning of the word "nature." Special interest and occasional bitterness have been imported into the discussion at this point, because of the use often made of the phrase as a proof-text in favour of the Church doctrine of original sin.—(1) We shall, first of all, seek to settle the meaning of the word nature (*φύσις*). It properly means that which forms the ground for the subsequent development of any being, as opposed to additions that have been made from without. That which has grown is by nature,

that which has been made is by art. But that which is the ground of development is a presupposition of the earliest dawn of life, and so "nature," as thus understood, means innate qualities inherent in this being. So far as the mere word is concerned, no other meaning seems to be required in all the New Testament passages in which it occurs. Let the student take Grimm's *Lexicon* and examine all the passages quoted, which form a complete list of all the instances of its use in the New Testament, and he will find that modifications of meaning lie in the context, and not in any difference of signification in the word itself.—(2) We next proceed to consider what, according to the context, the nature of that being is which is spoken of in our text. It is described as the object of wrath, and that wrath is, as we have seen, the wrath of God. Now it is evident that the nature of a pure creature of God could not be the object of His wrath, but only of His approval. But the being described in the passage before us is a child of disobedience, dead through trespasses and sins. The nature of such a being, which constitutes the principle of his sinful development, is the object of the divine wrath. "Nature," as thus contextually modified, is practically equivalent to the sinful condition of fallen man. But for this nature there would be no sinful development. The first actual sin would be a monstrosity, an effect without a cause, but for the presupposition of the existence of this sinful principle, this corrupt nature.—(3) What distinction is intended to be indicated by the use of the phrase "by nature"? What difference would it make if we were to read simply, "We all were children of wrath as others"? Many expositors have understood the apostle, by the phrase "we all," to make a pointed reference to himself and his Jewish fellow-countrymen. Jewish Christians, as well as Gentile believers, were formerly in a state of condemnation. Proceeding on this assumption of the significance of "we all," they explain the phrase "by nature" by a reference to the Jewish national privileges. The Jews had indeed the covenants of promise, and to them had been committed the oracles of God, but even they, until they had yielded themselves to God as members of His spiritual kingdom, were, by reason of their sinful condition,

objects of the divine wrath. This is the converse of Ernesti's theory. He would say that the Jews, like all others, were by nature children, but that they by wicked works had become objects of wrath; those maintaining this view now under consideration say, "The Jews by outward privilege were children, but by nature, like all others, they were children of wrath." Others might even put it thus, "By natural descent all of us Jewish Christians were formerly in the same condemnation with you Gentiles, from whom we were distinguished only by laws and ordinances outwardly imposed." If this interpretation could be sustained, the passage would, without more ado, be removed from the list of proof-texts for the doctrine of original sin. But we cannot admit the correctness of this interpretation. There is no reason whatever for introducing the distinction of Jews and Gentiles here. It was casually introduced in chap. i. 12, 13, by a reference to the pre-Christian Messianic hope by which the Jews were distinguished from the Gentiles, and it is formally brought to the front in vers. 11-22 of this chapter, but in our passage the apostle simply affirms the absolutely universal prevalence among men of the sinful condition. The "you" of ver. 1 are the members of the church addressed, whether originally Jews or Gentiles, and the "we all" of ver. 3 is no more than a self-evident generalising of the earlier "you."¹—(4) The proper meaning of the whole phrase will be reached if we carefully attend to the antithesis of "we all" and "the rest." The all in the sense of all mankind comprises "we all," believers in Christ, and "the rest," unbelievers. What makes "the rest" to differ from "we all," is the want of faith. In times past "we all" were like "the rest" in respect of unbelief. The contrast then is that suggested by chap. i. 4, 5, between the

¹ Eadie stands almost alone in maintaining this view. De Wette understands the "we" as referring to those who had been for a considerable time believers in Christ, and so holds by the idea of a contrast between the "we" and the "you." Elliott understands by "we all" a reference to both Jews and Gentiles—all of us, reclaimed Jews and converted Gentiles. Such emphasising of the different elements seems uncalled for, but the interpretation practically yields that general reference for which we plead. On the other hand, Harless, Meyer, Olshausen, and other distinguished commentators, refer the "we," in defiance of the added "all," to the Jewish Christians exclusively.

children of God's love and the children of God's wrath. The ultimate ground of this contrast lies in God having chosen us in love, and having thus made us to differ from "the rest," who by nature were the same. Up to the time of their conversion there was no difference. The contrast then is between nature and grace; by nature children of wrath, by grace are ye saved (ver. 5).—(5) Starting from this point, Hofmann maintains that the term "nature" in our text cannot legitimately be regarded as inborn, inherited condition involving guilt apart from any consequent development. As contrasted with grace, nature is indeed nothing more than a sinful condition; but the fact that it is a universal condition necessitates our assuming a corresponding principle antecedent to any manifestation of sin in the life. This difficulty besets all who seek to stop short of a full acceptance of the Church doctrine of original sin, by defining nature as a sinful state, and not as a sinful principle originating that state, and present from birth in all men. Thus Meyer, who endeavours laboriously to prove that the apostle does not here refer to inborn sinfulness and guilt, as exposing man from his birth to God's wrath, maintains that the childship of wrath, by which all in unbelief are characterised, is here defined as their nature (*φύσις*), which, therefore, means simply natural constitution. This, too, is the view of Daehne, *Entwicklung des Paulinischen Lehrbegriffs*, p. 68, 1835. But it is admitted, both by Meyer and by Daehne, that the fact of universal sinfulness can be accounted for only on the supposition that all men are born with a sinful principle in them, by the development of which the whole subsequent sinful life is produced, only they say that the apostle here does not make the possession of this principle, but the actual sins proceeding from it, as detailed in the preceding verses, the object of his wrath. On the other hand, the rationalistic Rückert, interpreting, as he says, for no system, the careful and dispassionate Harless, and the penetrating and spiritual Olshausen, all maintain that, unless we do violence to the plain meaning of the apostle's language, we must understand him to teach that we are born into the world with a sinful nature, and that, as bearers of that nature, before we have done any sinful act

(that is, any act at all, for every act of such a nature is sinful), we are objects of the divine wrath. This is certainly the natural interpretation of Rom. v. 12–19, and the present passage, and is in harmony with the whole drift of Pauline theology. Nothing whatever seems to be gained by the refinements of Meyer. The real mystery lies not in the attaching of guilt to the presence of the sinful principle, which even Meyer admits to exist in the new-born child, so that it makes its appearance in act so soon as the child is *able* to sin, but in the very presence of a principle that secures such a history. It appears to us absolutely certain that Paul's teaching here and all through his epistles is that God has concluded all under unbelief, in order that all may be brought within the range of His offered salvation.

Those styled before "*children of disobedience*" are here styled in consequence "*children of wrath.*" Though it is not specifically named in our text the wrath of God, the explicit statement in chap. v. 6, where it is said that the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience, is sufficient proof of the apostle's meaning. There is a strong aversion on the part of many modern theologians, and still more on the part of modern religious writers, to admit the reality of any "wrath of God." The love of God, according to a current superficial view, is supposed to exclude the idea of wrath. Yet the New Testament is full of references to the divine wrath. "He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36). The same apostle, too, speaks of the wrath of the Lamb, just because He is the perfect revealer of God, and represents all the aspects of the divine character. It is "a quality essential to a perfect nature," and as such is found in God the Father and in Jesus Christ the Lamb of God.¹ That wrath to which the children of disobedience are exposed is the sentence of the just and holy God upon sin. It is equivalent to that death which has passed upon all who have sinned. The children of wrath, when they have sinned away their opportunities, being found finally impenitent, become vessels of wrath (Rom. ix. 22), but

¹ See Nicoll, "The Wrath of the Lamb," *The Lamb of God*, p. 109 sq., Lond. 1884.

this state is not reached by any one until, by his obdurate refusal to repent and believe, he has "fitted himself to destruction." One of the most complete and judicious expositions of this subject is that of Goodwin in his *Unregenerate Man's Guiltiness before God*, Bk. xiii. chap. iii. (*Works*, vol. x. pp. 496-501). An admirable exposition of the apostle's meaning is also given by Weiss, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, ii. 4, in opposition to the misunderstandings of Beyschlag and Pfleiderer. A proper conception of the love of God, the Righteous One, toward the world in which there is unrighteousness, necessarily involves the idea of His wrath, which is nothing else than holy love checked and hindered in its outflow. "This restrained manifestation of love, which in one aspect of it may be designated wrath, in another aspect is called grief or distress in the Holy Spirit of love, and wrath is thus turned into compassion. It is only when this wrath of God is allowed that any mention can be made of his compassion."¹ This distinguishes the Scripture doctrine of the wrath of God from the notions of heathen writers regarding the anger of the gods as mere envy and jealousy of men. In the one case, the constraining was love of holiness, seeking its diffusion and emancipation; in the other, it was indifference as to the happiness of man or positive hatred of the race. The wrath of God consumes only what is fit for burning and for nothing else, only what has fitted itself to destruction.—Attention is called by Goodwin (*Works*, vol. iii. p. 314) to the important difference between *a child of wrath* and *a child under wrath*, the latter being the case of a child of God, chastised and vexed in his spirit by the Father of his spirit (Heb. xii. 9) in the interest of his spiritual life.

An extremely violent but quite uncalled for attack has been made by Dr. Dale (*Epistle to the Ephesians*, pp. 162, 163) upon the Calvinistic doctrine of the Westminster Confession and the Thirty-nine Articles, in connection with the interpretation of this phrase. Neither the passages which he quotes from those two documents, nor any other statements in them, support his sweeping assertion (p. 162),

¹ Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, pp. 303-306, Edin. 1866. Comp. also, Müller, *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, pp. 247-248, Edin. 1868.

that they teach that "by our *mere* birth we incur the divine anger, and that, *apart* from any voluntary wrong-doing, we are under the divine curse." Those symbolical writings, like all other similar works, do not consider the case of original sin apart from actual sin. Original sin can have no meaning for us except when thought of in connection with that for which it supplies an origin. What has to be accounted for is the absolute universality of human sin. How is it that every human being born into the world commits sin? Paul answers this in our text by saying that all alike, Jews and Gentiles, have the same sinful nature. They are thus all of them objects of the divine wrath, not apart from their sinful lives, but as possessors of a nature that manifests itself in acts of sin. This, says Dr. Dale, is not the doctrine either of Christ or of Paul. According to Dale, nature in the language of Paul is opposed to grace, as the natural is opposed to the supernatural, and those who are in a state of nature are living their own life without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They have broken the law written in their hearts, and by their own acts have separated themselves from God, and so have *become* "children of wrath." This terrible destiny, he says, was, according to Paul, their inheritance not by birth but by choice. On the contrary, Paul discovers the reason for the universality of sin, and its consequent curse, in the fact that it is the inheritance of all men by birth and by choice. It is quite true to say that every one makes choice of sin. Dr. Dale deliberately refuses to go further, and labours hard to show that Paul refuses to go further. But we hold that in our text Paul does go further, and that he offers an explanation of the fact that the same choice is made by all. They are all dead to God through trespasses and sins, and they have all trespassed and sinned because all have this sinful nature. The nature is, therefore, evidently something antecedent to all sinful acts consequent upon the sinful choice. And hence Ellicott, though certainly under the influence of no dogmatic prejudice in favour of a severe application of the phrase, feels himself obliged in fairness to admit that the connection shows that the doctrinal references must imply what is *innate*, and that "the clause contains an

indirect, and therefore even more convincing, assertion of that profound truth," the doctrine of original sin. Dr. Dale's own explanation of Paul's use of the term "nature" is singularly unfortunate and unsatisfactory. If we take his language in its evident sense, it is the adoption on his own part, and the ascription to Paul, of a limited antithetical use of the word "nature," such as a careful reading of the epistles must emphatically refute. All recognised exponents of Pauline doctrine agree that with Paul "by nature" means originating in man's—that is, fallen man's—constitution, with which (in a more or less developed state) he is born. Nature is opposed to grace, not as the natural to the supernatural, but as the first birth to the second.

One other point in regard to this clause calls for notice. The position of the words "by nature" (*φύσει*) between the words "children" and "of truth," has been thought by some, *e.g.* Ellicott, to make this phrase unemphatic, so that it should not be regarded as marking an important addition to the preceding clause. Philippi, *Glaubenslehre*, iii. 216, on the understanding that the apostle by the "ye" of the first verse, and the "we" of our text, intends to mark the distinction between Gentiles and Jews, thinks that the position of *φύσει* indicates its introduction as an after-thought, and that its insertion at the beginning of the clause would have implied that the Jews were by nature only, and not by wicked works, children of wrath. As we have already said, we cannot admit that any such distinction can be found in our passage when rightly interpreted. The contrast is simply believers and unbelievers, we all and the rest. With this connection, we accept Philippi's view of the unsuitableness of placing the phrase "by nature" at the beginning of the clause. The apostle wishes to connect actual and original sin, the fruit and the root, and to show that this connection renders those who are under it the children of wrath.

The term has been admirably dealt with by Chrysostom and by Augustine. In his *Homilies on Ephesians*, p. 138, ed. 1840, Chrysostom says, "As he who is a child of man is by nature man, so also were we children of wrath even as others, *i.e.* no one was free, but we all did things worthy of

wrath." It was evidently intended as an explanation of the universal fact of sin. He connects the words "by nature," not with "we were," but with "children," to prevent any concluding that men were by nature under wrath, in the sense that Adam had been so created by God. Nature here, Chrysostom would remind us, is our actual fallen nature as we have it from Adam, who sinned. So too Augustine, *Retract.* i. 15; *De Libero Arbitrio*, iii. 54.

Modern science, and a moderate sensible Calvinism, are at one in maintaining the solidarity of the race, and the transmission of hereditary characteristics. Though individually we are responsible only for individual acts, these acts are really revelations of the race character which has given a bias to our lives and conduct. "We must begin," it has been said in an admirable and thoughtful book, only too little known (*Enigma Vita*, by John Wilson, Lond. 1887, p. 231, comp. generally 220-235, "The Race-Nature and New-Christ-Nature"), "we must begin with the perception of personal guilt, and through that we see what human nature is, and what Christ needed to do for it. Conviction of sin goes deeper than the recognition of personal acts of sin; it makes us see that this race-nature which we have inherited is guilty, condemned, and dead to its true life, the life in God for which it was meant. Into that nature we were born, and we cannot by our own power get out of it."

Ver. 4. *But God being rich in mercy.*—We have here the contrast introduced. The apostle has shown what man is, what all men are out of Christ in their natural state, and now he proceeds to show what God has done, and what a change this has produced. A new start is here made with a new construction. The source of all the blessings of salvation is in God Himself. The riches of His mercy explains all that follows. In proportion as the sinfulness of sin, and the misery of lying under the disfavour of God, are seen and felt, will the mercy of God which deals with such sin and misery be recognised as rich. So in Ps. li. 1, where the Psalmist has intense conviction of the greatness of his sin, and in Ps. lxi. 13-16, where the writer feels keenly the misery of his isolation amid his cruel enemies, the cry is raised to

God that He should show “the *greatness* of His tender mercies.” Mercy, ἔλεος, is compassion, the special manifestation of love when its objects are the miserable, as grace, χάρις, is the exercise of favour towards the guilty. Bengel says, *Gratia tollit culpam misericordia miseriam*. The pitying love of God for sinners is His *mercy*, and the giving of His Son for their salvation is His *grace*. “It is true that the same persons are the subjects of both, by being at once the guilty and the miserable; yet the righteousness of God, which it is quite as necessary should be maintained as His love, demands that the guilt should be done away with before the misery can be assuaged; only the forgiven may be blessed. He must pardon before He can heal; men must be justified before they can be sanctified.”¹ And as the mercy and the grace have the same recipients, so He who is rich in mercy manifests also the riches of His grace (chaps. i. 7, ii. 7).

Moved by His great love wherewith He loved us.—The use of “us” here is fitted to confirm our understanding of the “you” of ver. 1, and the “we” of ver. 3. Also the use in ver. 5 of “ye” in the parenthetic clause, supports the idea that the “you” of ver. 1 is intended not to separate them into a special class, but to arouse the personal attention and interest of his readers. The “us” of our text is plainly the whole company of believers. God is not moved to love us by His pity, but He is moved to pity us by His love. In all that God does He is simply satisfying the most characteristic attribute of His being. He glorifies His love, he makes it known as “*great*” (διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀγάπην αὐτοῦ), when He saves sinners. Precisely the same phrase is used by the Lord in John xvii. 26 of the Father’s love to Him, which, by His revelation of God to the disciples, would also be in them. The special display of love meant here is, therefore, the whole work of Christ’s atoning sacrifice (so Meyer). God pitied man’s misery, and because His love was great, even the unspeakable costliness of the remedy did not lead Him to withhold relief.

Ver. 5. *We being still dead by trespasses.*—Here we have reiteration of a clause from ver. 1, brought in for the purpose of securing the undivided praise of man’s salvation to God’s

¹ Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, 10th ed., p. 171, Lond. 1886.

grace. Before there was anything attractive in us His love moved Him. Meyer would mark the connection by a simple "and" (καὶ ὅντας ἡμᾶς), understanding the purpose of the clause to be that man's great need was a motive alongside of God's great love for His imparting spiritual life to us by Christ. Ellicott renders "*even while we were dead*," and understands the purpose of the clause to be the heightening of the greatness of God's love that quickened even the dead. To this Meyer's objection is fatal, that only the dead need quickening. But Meyer's own interpretation is contrary to the teaching of the whole passage, which evidently is meant to point to God Himself, and nothing outside of Him, as the source of man's salvation. The apostle recapitulates his statement regarding man's spiritual deadness, in order to impress us forcibly with the impossibility of man contributing anything to the work.¹

Quickened us together with Christ. — The most important question here is the determining of the nature of the quickening referred to. The only distinguished commentator who understands the quickening in a physical sense is Meyer. He interprets it to mean the immortality which is secured to us by Christ's being made alive; what is accomplished in Him is already for that reason accomplished in those who are His. The great majority of commentators understand the statement of our text to refer to spiritual quickening. Lightfoot (*Colossians*, ed. 5th, p. 186, 1880, on Col. ii. 13) is inclined to accept and combine both interpretations. "To St. Paul the future glorified life is only the continuation of the present moral and spiritual life. The two are the same in essence, however the accidents may differ. Moral and spiritual regeneration is salvation, is life." This statement, which is a repetition somewhat less guarded of what Alford had said in his notes on our passage, is no doubt in itself doctrinally correct, and is in agreement with Ellicott's remark that, along with the principal reference to the impart-

¹ Compare Weiss, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, ii. 110: "The moral condition of heathenism is expressly designated as being dead through sin (Eph. ii. 1, 5; comp. ver. 4). Closely connected with this, by a peculiar turn of the image, the idea of a resurrection with Christ is opposed not to a dying with Christ, but to the former state of death (Col. ii. 12, 13, iii. 1; Eph. ii. 5, 6)."

ing of spiritual life, there may be also a secondary reference to the physical quickening. But it does not seem as if the apostle in the passage before us had at all before him the idea of physical revivification with Christ. Fergusson, of Kilwinning, has made a shrewd remark, which displays true exegetical insight, and should help us here. "There is," he says, "an infallible connection betwixt converting grace and salvation, so that all those who are now converted and quickened shall be undoubtedly saved; for what the apostle calleth 'quickened' in the former part of the verse, he calleth 'saved' in the close, so that he taketh the one for the other: He hath quickened us—by grace ye are saved." There should be no difficulty in deciding here in favour of the spiritual signification of "quickened," if only we hold firmly to the connection with the preceding clause. Those who are at the time spoken of as spiritually dead, require there and then the communication of spiritual life. God's great love moved Him to provide for us a suitable gift, life from the dead. The death inflicted on Christ, as the representative of sinners, if it had fallen on the sinners themselves, would have been spiritual and eternal death. When the sinner dies bearing his own sin, he remains dead under the curse of the still unsatisfied law. God quickened the dead Christ because the demands of His law were satisfied. He, and therefore with Him those who are His, die no more. When God gave Him life again, this was the guarantee (and because God's guarantee, therefore already the gift) to all who believe in Christ, of a life no longer subject to the wages of sin. With Him they passed from death unto life,—the transition in His case being representative, in theirs personal. The quickening, therefore, refers primarily to the sinner's justification, and, by consequence, to that fellowship of life which all the justified have in communion with Him who for them was dead, but now for them is alive again. The reading which inserts *ἐν* before Christ is without any considerable support, and evidently resulted from a desire to make this passage correspond with the following verse. The use of the false reading perhaps led to the strange misunderstanding on the part of Beza and Calvin, which have been repeated in later times by

Bloomfield, who join "together with" with us, and interpret "of it" of the union of Jews and Gentiles.

By grace ye are saved.—These words are introduced parenthetically as a hurried utterance of the apostle, anxious to prevent his readers from forgetting for a moment that they owe all to God. It is a restatement of the truth, set forth in chap. i. 19, of the greatness of God's power to usward who believe. It is the grace of God, not of Christ, that is referred to, and God has quickened them with Christ, and that quickening is their salvation. Saved by Christ's death, their salvation is one that has been completed in the past, while its living efficacy continues.

Ver. 6. *And raised us up together.*—To be raised up is the immediate consequence of being made to live. The dead made alive proceeds to discharge the functions of life. He is loosed and immediately he will go. The resurrection here spoken of must be interpreted in the same way as the quickening of the previous verse. The believer is raised up spiritually with Christ in His resurrection. What God wrought upon Christ is all and wholly done for our spiritual benefit, in order to procure for us and to confer upon us spiritual life. The incarnation and the resurrection are the grand means employed by God to make us know the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe. "The resurrection," says Baldwin Brown in a very noble sermon, in *The Risen Christ the King of Men*, "is a further and essential stage in the development of the incarnation. By the incarnation the divine is born into the sphere of the human; by the resurrection the human is born into the sphere of the divine for ever."

And made us sit together.—These words, of course, must be interpreted spiritually, in harmony with those which precede. The patristic interpretation generally inclines to a literal understanding of the words; some regarding them as referring to a future state of glory in heaven, and others applying them to that spiritual exaltation that is ideally entered on now, but actually enjoyed hereafter. We consider the words as simply carrying out the idea of the previously mentioned quickening and resurrection. He who is made

spiritually alive, and who enters upon the exercise of the functions of the new life, necessarily, in the very progress of that life, rises heavenward. Risen with Christ, he seeks those things which are above, where Christ sitteth (Col. iii. 1).

In heavenly places.—This phrase, we have seen (i. 3), means the sphere of spiritual life and operation. It marks the scene of God's presence in favour. It marks God's right hand where Christ sitteth, and we with Him. Nearness to God is the spiritual blessing indicated by our being seated along with Christ. The right belonging to Him as Son He shares with us. The atmosphere of these places is the Spirit's breath, which the quickened and raised with Christ breathe, and by which they are inspired. According as we receive of His Spirit, we share His spiritual dominion. We reign with Him as we rise with Him into possession of the love of God the Father (John xvii. 26).

In Christ Jesus.—Moule speaks as if these words took the place of the phrase "with Christ" of ver. 5. But each of the three verbs contains in itself the idea, "together with" Christ. The phrase "in Christ Jesus" adds a further thought, that of our mystical union with Christ. It could not have been used along with the verb "quickened us together with Christ," for those who are the subjects of this operation were at that time not in union with Christ, but dead in sins. They are now, however, quickened with Christ, and from that moment onwards, are subjects of Christ's resurrection and glorifying power, in consequence of their vital union with Him.

Ver. 7. *That in the ages to come.*—The word "age" (αἰών) we have already met with in ver. 2, where it is rendered "course," meaning probably a period of indefinite duration, the idea of duration being that which is essential to the world. The whole phrase (οἱ αἰῶνες οἱ ἐπερχόμενος) means an indefinite future; it may be near at hand or far off; it is simply "to come." Similar phrases occur in chap. i. 21 (αἰὼν μέλλων), and Luke xviii. 30 (ὁ αἰὼν ὁ ἐρχόμενος). Many have understood the previous passage to refer to the calling of the Gentiles (Calvin and many Catholic and Reformed expositors),

and so have rendered the phrase in our text "future generation," restricting it to this present world. Ellicott, following Wolf, restricts the reference to the age between that of the apostle and the second coming, which therefore, he suggests, Paul did not regard as near. Others, who restrict the previous context to the literal bodily resurrection (Meyer), understand "the ages to come" to mean "the future life." Harless makes it refer to the experience of believers who are quickened and raised, but still look to the future world for their enthronement with Christ. But we have seen that believers are seated with Christ in this life. There is no reason for restricting the phrase to either dispensation. It is simply and broadly "future ages," whether in this world or in the next. And so Origen uses the passage in his Commentary on John (iv. 40) to prove against Heraclion, the Gnostic, that not only, as Heraclion had admitted, both before and after the passion the union between Christ and His disciples continued, but also throughout still later periods. See *Cambridge Texts and Studies*, vol. i. No. 4, 1891, *The Fragments of Heraclion*, p. 90.

He might prove the exceeding riches of His grace.—God's purpose in saving men with this full salvation, including the spiritual blessings of quickening, resurrection, and exaltation into His own presence, was to demonstrate the incomparableness of His grace. This, indeed, was precisely what had to be proved. The greatness of His power wrought in Christ (i. 19), and the riches of His grace displayed toward man, are both of the same transcendent quality.—The word "exceeding" (*ὑπερβάλλον*) does not carry with it this idea of "outbidding" which an ultra-acute German critic has sought to connect with it here and throughout the epistle.¹ It is used here and in chap. i. 19 as an adjective heightening the following substantive to the superlative degree.—The riches of God's grace is proved to all time by what God has done in and

¹ E. Pfeiderer, "Heraelitsche Spuren auf theol. insbes. altebristlichen Boden" in *Jahrbücher für Prot. Theologie*, xiii. 194-195, 1887, seeks to show that the idea of outbidding other systems is characteristic of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and advances this as a proof of the lateness of the epistle, whose author he supposes to have had the Gnostic systems in view. This is dealt with in the Introduction.

upon Christ. It is not that His dealings with the Ephesians are an example to subsequent generations of the nature and range of God's grace, but that Christ, the sinner's substitute, is made of God the Resurrection and the Life for all who believe in Him—is the demonstration to all ages, here and hereafter, of the riches of His grace.

In kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.—The manner of His proof is described as kindness. By His kindness He proves His grace. The word here used (*χρηστότης*), together with “philanthropy,” is employed in Titus iii. 4 to describe the contents of the manifested grace of God. The same designation is given to the yoke of Christ as easy (*χρηστός*), and with a play on the name Christ was called “Chrestus” by the enemies of the Christians, with a sneering suggestion of weakness.¹—The kindness of His grace is revealed in *Christ Jesus*. This is not a simple repetition of the statement already made, that God's work on and in Christ as our representative proves His grace, but is a new statement showing that this demonstration is made only to those who are in vital union with Christ. It is only as in Christ we are sealed together with Christ that we can know the love that passeth knowledge. And only he who himself knows the love of Christ, can fully appreciate the demonstration which God makes of the riches of His grace.

Ver. 8. *For by grace are ye saved through faith.*—The pre-eminent excellence of God's salvation lies in this, that it proceeds wholly from Himself. But the apostle not only speaks of Him whose work it is, but also of the means whereby it becomes ours. It is appropriated by faith, which of course, as the mere receiving, presupposes the provision already made.—The question then arises here, “What do we receive upon the exercise of faith which we had not before? Our salvation is God's work, and our destination to it is God's eternal purpose. It is God who has saved us according to His own purpose and grace, which are given us in Christ

¹ Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, iii: *Christianus vero, quantum interpretatio est de unctione deducitur. Sed et cum perperam Chrestianus pronunciatur a vobis (nam nec nominis certa est notitia penes vos) de suavitare, vel benignitate compositum est. Oditur itaque in hominibus innocuis etiam nomen innocuum.*

Jesus before the world began (2 Tim. i. 9). We are saved, then, according to this eternal purpose of God. What does the apostle mean by saying, 'Ye are saved through faith?' In 2 Tim. i. 10 he says that Christ's appearing has made manifest God's purpose. Does he mean in one text that, by the exercise of faith, we simply make it manifest that we are subjects of God's electing grace? This would be to confound faith with assurance, and to make faith play the part assigned to good works in the system of New Testament doctrine. On the contrary, according to Paul, faith justifies, in contrast to the law which does not (Gal. ii. 16). What was destined to them in eternity they really obtained, when they presented themselves to have it bestowed on them. Goodwin illustrates, by the figure of copyholders, who have a right to their land when their fathers die, but must, by an appearance in court, take up their right before they enter on its enjoyment. In Christ, from eternity, the elect have salvation as their right, but they enter on its eternal possession when they believe. The salvation was thus beforehand complete. It was all the work of God's grace; and its destination also was all of grace. The entering upon the possession of it by faith is therefore no work. It gives nothing to the God of salvation. It is only a taking, and in no sense or degree a giving.—"Faith," says Calvin, "brings a man empty to God that he may be filled with the blessings of Christ." "The hands of all other graces," says Goodwin, "are working hands, but the hands of faith are merely receiving hands."

And this not of yourselves.—"This" (τοῦτο) was, by the older commentators, referred to faith, but most modern expositors, such as Harless, Meyer, Ellicott, following Calvin, rightly refer it to the salvation by grace. It is a reinforcement, from the negative point of view, of the declaration that God alone is the author of our salvation; we do not contribute to it.

The gift is God's.—This, again, is from the positive side an emphatic restatement of the same proposition. The phrase is commonly quoted as referring to faith. Graham, for example, looks with suspicion on the view that salvation and not faith is here designated God's gift, as an interpretation framed by

Arminians. It is much more natural, more in keeping with Scripture usage, and with the drift of the apostle's discourse, to think of Christ as the gift of God, Christ as appointed of God to the work of our salvation. God's gift to us is Christ, designated sometimes by His benefits. Calvin is not turned aside from his work of exposition by fear of Arminianism. "Here," he says, "we must advert to a very common error in the interpretation of this passage. Many persons restrict the word *gift* to faith alone. But Paul is only repeating in other words the former sentiment. His meaning is, not that faith is the gift of God, but that salvation is given to us, that salvation comes to us, by the gift of God."

Ver. 9. *Not of works*.—Their faith has utility but no merit; it is of service to those who exercise it, but not to God. The hand that takes a gift does nothing, performs no work toward the production or purchase of that gift. And God has determined the condition of the enjoyment of His gift.

In order that no one should boast.—Boasting would neutralise the spiritual discipline of God's method of salvation, which demands from man absolute, self-forgetting surrender, all the glory to God.

Ver. 10. *For we are His workmanship*.—"We" certainly means believers. The idea of Rückert that it means men generally, need only be mentioned as an exegetical curiosity. It is only of believers that the apostle is speaking throughout this whole section; in vers. 1-3 of what they were before conversion, and in vers. 4-10 of what in regard to possession and prospect they owe to grace.—The force of the conjunction "for" (*γὰρ*) is to place our clause in immediate connection with the last words of the preceding verse. It is not, as many commentators assume, to introduce a reason for the whole statement of the purely gracious origin and destination of our salvation. The latter, as Hofmann says, might rather be advanced not as a reason for, but as an illustration of, the former. Really the statements that our salvation is God's gift, and that we, the saved, are God's workmanship, are one and the same, so that the one cannot be advanced as the ground of the other. The apostle simply says: "No believing man can boast of his good works, for he is himself God's workmanship. All that the

believer is and has he owes to God, who has made that new nature which yields those good fruits." God says to the believer, "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" The believer answers, "By the grace of God I am what I am."—The word "workmanship" (ποίημα) occurs only once elsewhere in the New Testament. In Rom. i. 20 it is used of the natural or visible creation. It is used by Athanasius in the sense of "created being." In our text it is certainly used simply with reference to the spiritual creation, God's renewal of man's nature by His grace. Wordsworth and Ellicott regard the word as referring, though not exclusively, to the first creation. Undoubtedly the fact that, as natural beings, we are God's work, forms the ground of His operations upon us in the new creation. It is as our Maker that He has the interest in us to be our Redeemer. But here, as we have said, the apostle speaks only of believers and of what they as believers owe to God, who has made them to differ from the rest. This new nature, which constitutes our true being, we have from Him, and so we are His workmanship as no others are.

Created in Christ Jesus unto good works.—This phrase explains particularly in what way this workmanship of God, as seen in the believer, is distinguished from every other work of God. The distinctive character of that workmanship is described under three particulars: (1) It is according to its nature a creation; (2) This new creation is effected by means of a vital union formed with Christ Jesus; and (3) It is wrought in order to the production of good works.—The word "*created*" here corresponds in Scripture usage so clearly with "*workmanship*" of the previous clause (ποιεῖν and κτίζειν being both used in the LXX. to translate the Hebrew ברא), that we can only distinguish the creating as the beginning of the process that ultimately produces what is recognised as Christ's workmanship. In this epistle the word is used of God's world-creating power (iii. 9), and here and in ver. 15 and iv. 24 of man's restoration as a new creature in Christ.—The relationship with Christ Jesus which effects this new creation must be regarded as a vital one, like that which consummated the act of God in the first creation. As God's breath

inspired the first man, so that his natural life depended upon the retention of this divine breath, and the departure of it meant physical dissolution; even so Christ's breath, which He breathed on His disciples, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," gives vitality to the new man, who is preserved from spiritual death by the continued presence of that Spirit which is His and makes His all those in whom it dwells. This indwelling Spirit is all-pervasive, and so we live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. We are in Christ, as we have the Spirit in us. As the Spirit pervades our whole being and assimilates us to Himself, our nature becomes a creation in Christ, the elements constituting our being are found in Christ and are derived from Him alone. All that the Spirit does is to bring to us the graces of Christ wherewith to build up our spiritual lives.—The end of this creation is that His workmanship should produce good works. This will be the best evidence that the work is His who Himself is good, that the creation is wrought in Him who went about doing good. Man's chief end, in the first and second creations alike, is God's glory; and herein, said Christ to His disciples, "is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." These good works performed by the believer are fruits of his new creation, the proper products of that new nature which the presence of Christ's Spirit has begotten in us.—In this passage, which, by insisting upon the fact that the creation is wholly God's work, is so characteristically Pauline, we see how distinctly present to the apostle's mind was also that aspect of the truth so properly emphasised by James. The believer is God's workmanship, therefore he cannot boast of his faith as though it had been the product of his own will and endeavour; but the faith that is God's work evidences its divine origin by producing good works in the life, and so the faith that produces no good works is dead and remains alone, because it wants the vitality of the Spirit's breath.

Which God, before prepared that we should walk in them.—Provision has been made in God's eternal plan for these good works. Just as surely as the believer has an eternal election to faith, so also is there an eternal election of the sphere in which he is to walk. Having created us anew, God does not

leave us to work out results which may assume one form or another. "The seed principles and adequate causes of all the good works of God's children were provided for in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world."¹ In Christ we have not only the first start in the new life in conversion, but also every movement of that new life in the producing of good works. In Him these good works have an eternal existence. They are pre-existent in Him, and appear in us as we are in Him. What therefore is said of God's foreordination of His Son as our Redeemer, is here said of God's preparation in eternity of those divine treasures stored up in the Son, from which the redeemed in time should draw. It is not said that God predestined those works, but He actually prepared them in Christ, and as Christ is before all worlds so also this preparation of good works in Him is "*before*" any creation activity on the part of God. Our good works are not our own, wrought first by us as individuals, but they are Christ's, and become ours when we are Christ's. They are wrought in us who are in fellowship with Christ, because that fellowship is a fellowship of conduct, and if we walk in Him we necessarily walk in good works. So John declares that we have fellowship with God just as we walk in the light, as He is the light (1 John i. 7), and Himself is light.

SECT. V.—THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES (Chap. ii. 11–iii. 13).

The apostle finds it necessary to devote a long passage to a careful and detailed examination of the question, as to the relation in which believing Gentiles stand to God as compared with Jewish believers. There was a danger arising in all young Christian communities, of the more numerous and powerful element, in some cases Jewish, in other cases Gentile, boasting itself over the less numerous and influential. In Ephesus, as in all the other churches founded by apostles, the original nucleus was Jewish, but subsequent success had lain among the Gentile population, in which also lay the main hope of all future expansion. It was natural that the first-called Jews should magnify their national privileges, and

¹ Pulsford, *Christ and His seed*, p. 68.

should endeavour to compensate for their numerical insignificance by the persistent presentation of arrogant and exclusive claims. It was equally natural that the later-called Gentiles, encouraged by the fact that accessions were being made chiefly from their class, should regard the slowness to believe on the part of the Jews as evidence of their loss of the divine favour and of the withdrawal from them of all privilege, and that in consequence they should imagine that what had been taken away from the Jews was now conferred by way of distinction and advantage upon them. The apostle therefore addresses himself, in the latter half of chap. ii. and in the earlier half of chap. iii., to the task of showing that there is no longer Jew nor Greek, but that they are both one in Christ Jesus. What is needed by all men alike is the securing of access to the Father, and this all men can have only in one way and by one Spirit. All assumption of pre-eminence is condemned, whether it may originate in a Jewish or in a Gentile source.

The paragraph consists of two parts. In the first (ii. 11–22) we are told what grace has done for the Gentiles who believed; in the second (iii. 1–13) we are told how the revelation of this was made to Paul.

(1) *What grace has done for Gentiles who believed*
(chap. ii. 11–22).

Ver. 11. *Wherefore remember, that ye being formerly Gentiles in the flesh.*—All that has been said in the previous section regarding the noble rank to which the believer has been raised by divine grace, as a new creature performing good works, is now conceived of as a motive fitted to arouse pleasant and profitable remembrances. They are called to consider, by comparison of the present with the past, what God has wrought. The apostle here for the first time specifically addresses the Gentile portion of the community. They are to understand that the blessed consequences of redeeming grace will appear in them as surely as in their brethren among the Jews. The remembrance of what their condition was before as “Gentiles in the flesh,” should greatly intensify their sense of obligation to God for what He has done in accomplishing so wonderful

a change in them. They have been lifted into a new sphere of privilege. The phrase by which the apostle reminds them of their past condition is unmistakeably intended by him to point only to the disadvantages of it, and not to the sinfulness of conduct by which it was characterised. It was characteristic of the past condition, not only of the Gentiles but also of the Jews, that "they did the will of the flesh" (ii. 3). What distinguished the Gentiles from the Jews was simply this, that they were not in possession of the special advantages and privileges of the covenant. And so the apostle does not say here that they were Gentiles "according to the flesh, but in the flesh," as not having there the visible marks of the rite of circumcision. They had not the circumcision in the flesh made with hands. The Jew had this, but merely as Jew he had nothing more. Whatever more he had—the circumcision of the heart—was of grace; and this, the apostle desires now to assure the Gentiles, they may have in the same measure and on the same terms.

Called uncircumcision by the so-called circumcision in the flesh made by hands.—Having called their attention to what they were in point of fact as regarded privilege, he now reminds them of the contemptuous manner in which those who boasted of their privilege treated them because of their want of it. Because of the evidence in their flesh, which bore no trace of the sign of this covenant, they were correctly called uncircumcision. The apostle wishes them to understand that they had occupied an unfavourable position at the outside of that circle within which God's covenant-mercies were enjoyed. But while himself recognising, and wishful that his readers should themselves recognise, the disadvantage of their earlier condition, as a special motive for thanksgiving in consideration of their present condition of favour, the apostle now calls attention to the character and standing of those who, in a contemptuous way, were accustomed then to designate them. They called themselves the circumcision, but as such they were self-styled. They arrogated to themselves the title. When one advances a claim on his own behalf, it is natural that others should insist upon an exhibition of the grounds on which such claims rest. Those arrogant Jewish con-

temners of the Gentiles, call themselves the circumcision, and the apostle now asks, "In what does this circumcision consist?" He answers that undoubtedly it is "in the flesh." The marks which are wanting in the Gentiles are found in them. But this sort of circumcision is wrought by hands. The production of it is purely mechanical, and the effect of it upon these men has been literally superficial. Now we should carefully note that Paul is very far from depreciating the national privileges of the Jews. To him the sign of circumcision is "a seal of the righteousness of faith" (Rom. iv. 11); but those who boasted of themselves and despised others, were altogether wanting in that faith whose presence alone could constitute circumcision a sign and seal. They were therefore as little circumcised as the Gentiles, because they had no appreciation of the spiritual significance of the rite, which they had undergone only outwardly. They were merely the circumcision *so-called*. They had the name, the outward sign, and nothing more. The worthlessness of this is emphasised by the repeated phrases, "in the flesh," "made by hands."—The apostle's purpose, in introducing the characterisation of the arrogant despisers of the Gentiles, seem to have been twofold. On the one hand, we cannot doubt that he desires the Jewish members of the community to beware of cherishing a boastful spirit, which, from its very nature, is incompatible with the doctrines of grace, and can have its origin only in some lurking remnant of an utterly unevangelical legalism. And, on the other hand, that such people as those who had the hand-made circumcision, and nothing more, should be able to claim a certain superiority over the Gentiles before they had believed, presents that former state of theirs in a yet darker aspect, and so gives special occasion for thankful remembrances of God's grace, by which they are not only made equal to those who have circumcision in the flesh made by hands, but are raised far above them into perfect equality with those who are circumcised in heart.

Ver. 12. *That at that time ye were without Christ.*—The apostle now indicates what it is that the Gentiles should remember. The description of this 12th verse refers to the

same period in their history as that of the 11th verse; and the phrase "at that time" corresponds to the words "in time past." The account given in the 11th verse of the former position of the Gentiles is not indeed parenthetical, because it really forms part of the contents of the remembrance urged upon them. Thus, however, what they were to remember was introduced in a participial clause, as indicating broadly and somewhat vaguely the unfavourableness of that position generally, as one notoriously defective in respect of privilege. Here the apostle states clearly what their special disadvantages were: first of all, under one comprehensive description, and then by means of four particular clauses in which the detailed contents of that description are set forth.—The comprehensive description of their former condition, as "without Christ," shows wherein the radical defect of the unbelieving Gentile condition consisted. As Gentiles in the flesh, they were members of a community which followed a course of life that had no relation to Christ, and made no reference to Him. Their lives were lived apart from Christ. It is undoubtedly quite true that those who only had the hand-made circumcision in the flesh were also without Christ, so far as their personal condition was concerned; but the following clauses, which bring out the particulars of their case, show that the apostle was now thinking of circumcision in the flesh as the doorway to the privileges, which opened up the fields of rich spiritual possibilities. It was under a sense of this that Paul could answer the question, "What advantage then hath the Jew? He had the oracles of God, the covenants of promise, the law, the service of God, the holy example of the fathers, and, chief of all, the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah within the limits of His race." This the apostle regards as an exceeding great advantage, not detracted from, far less abrogated, by the fact that many did not believe, and so refused to accept personally the benefit (Rom. iii. 1, ix. 4, 5). All the Jewish privileges culminate in this, that Christ, according to the flesh, was to be of the seed of Abraham. To belong to the seed of Abraham, to have the mark of circumcision which indicates the existence of such a relationship, was of itself inspiring; and whatever in any measure, even though it might

be but slightly and temporarily, directs the thoughts of the mind to Christ, was not a privilege to be lightly esteemed. Just as outward church connection in our own day, while of itself, it may be, nothing more or better than the mere circumcision in the flesh made by hands, is not to be despised, even though it should only secure for the ear the sound of the glad tidings of salvation; so the Jewish privilege, even to those who submitted themselves only to its outward operation, made it impossible altogether to remain ignorant of the promise that Messiah should come, or of the guilt of sin which made that coming necessary. To be without this was a distinct disadvantage. To be without anything that pointedly directed the mind to Christ as the foundation of all hope, was the condition of the Gentile, relatively lower than that of the Jew, out of which the grace of God now raised him.

Having become aliens from the citizenship of Israel.—In this, the first of the four explanatory clauses, the apostle shows how it came to pass that they were without Christ. The rendering in the Authorised Version, “being aliens,” is unfortunate, as implying a separation resulting from a difference of original nature. The same word occurs in chap. iv. 18 and in Col. i. 21, and in each case it indicates an alienation brought about by the conduct of the parties themselves. The original unity of the race had been broken up, not by the arbitrary interference of an outside party, but by the falling away into sin, which is essentially disintegrating, so that society had to be saved from utter dissolution by the separation of a holy seed. Men had alienated themselves from God, and not till they had done so did God choose for Himself a peculiar people. It was sin that separated, and God’s choice was that which made ultimate reunion possible. Apart from divine interference, all who had alienated themselves must have remained aliens. When God chose Abraham, and gave the promises to him and to his seed, He gave to men a rallying point around which they might gather again and have their lost unity restored. It was there that God would have all nations blessed in Abraham. The apostle describes this rallying point of the race as “the citizenship of Israel.” It was characteristic of the position of the Gentiles, that they persisted in remaining

in alienation. Most commentators (Ellicott, Harless, Meyer, etc.) render the word, as Authorised Version and Revised Version do, "commonwealth." Harless insists that citizenship can be spoken of only in reference to the individuals composing a nation, and not of the nation itself, and that the apostle would not use the idea of Roman citizenship to represent the theocratic state of Israel. We cannot speak of the Pauline usage of the word, for it does not elsewhere occur in his writings, and only once again in the New Testament (Acts xxii. 28), where it means citizenship. But when we consider the connection in which our passage occurs, and the emphasis laid by the apostle in the preceding verse upon the possession and want of privilege, we are constrained to agree with Calvin and other reformed commentators in preferring the rendering "citizenship," which also seems to be the primary meaning of the word. This also makes the following genitive more natural. All are agreed that the Israel from which the Gentiles were alienated is a spiritual conception. It is not Israel after the flesh that is thought of; for that would be simply a repetition of the general terms of the preceding verse. But the spiritual conception of Israel consists in the possession of spiritual rights and privileges. The citizenship of Israel is prevalence with God; what distinguishes the true Israelite is his power with God. The Israelite therefore is he who knows Christ as the restorer of this power, lost by sin. The Gentiles "without Christ" are still alienated from these rights and privileges.

And strangers from the covenants of the promise.—The promise is the Messianic promise (Gen. xii. 15, xv. 18, xvii. 8), repeated to the patriarchs, and formally extended to the people through Moses. With this the Gentiles had nothing to do, and of it they had no knowledge. It was the Messianic hope that constituted the citizenship of Israel; alienation from this citizenship was a grievous loss, because it meant the absence of that hope. The covenant and the promises are separately mentioned in Rom. ix. 4 among the privileges which constituted the advantage of the Jew.

Having no hope.—This was the immediate consequence of what has been described in the previous clauses. Apart from

the Messianic hope there was no hope for man. The promise of the Messiah was a promise of good things to come, so that no one possessing it could become utterly hopeless. But the apostle can appeal to the memories of the Gentiles, who had believed that, as unbelievers, they had nothing to hope for. All was blank. It is precisely the same phrase which Paul uses to describe the sad feeling of those who mourn the death of friends who were not in Christ (1 Thess. iv. 13).

And without God in the world.—To be in the world is descriptive of the life of all men in time. To be kept from the evil in the world is the prerogative of those who are in Christ Jesus. Those who are without Christ are without God; and to be in the world without God is to be without power or will to resist the current of the world, which sets toward the destruction of all that reflects any remnant of truth and holiness. The hope of man lies in his being able to stem this current, and for those who are without Christ there is no such hope. It is emphatically *in the world* that God is needed, to deliver us from the world: the God who is above the world, and separate from, and in his very nature opposed to, all the evil of the world. The gods of the Gentiles were really no gods, for they were the gods of the world—that is, demons, who hurried their worshippers on in their devotion to the corruptions of the world. The same word (*ἄθεοι*) is similarly used in Ignatius, *Epistle to the Trallians*, x., where the *Doceta*, who denied that Christ really died, are declared to be men without God. They are *ἄθεοι* because they are *ἄπιστοι*. Those who deny Christ are without God. We cannot hold aloof from Christ without separating ourselves from God.¹ The clause seems naturally to refer back to the statement regarding the Gentiles' alienation from the citizenship of Israel, just as the previous "having no hope" refers to the want of knowledge of and interest in the promise. To have the citizenship of Israel is to recognise God as King, to submit to His rule, and to enjoy His protection and help. To be alienated from that citizenship is to be without God, self surrendered to the powers of evil that destroy.

Ver. 13. *But now, in Christ Jesus.*—The apostle here sets

¹ Compare Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, ii. 174-175, 1890.

forth the contrast of the present with the past. The terseness of phrase, the promptness with which he presents the other side of the picture, indicates his sense of the sharpness of the contrast and the completeness of the separation of the *now* from *the time past*. Every particle that went to make up that past, is past, and does not reappear in any form or measure as an ingredient in that which he is now to unfold.—And what brings about that thorough-going change, what alone can account for it, is a new relation to Christ. Those who in the past were without Christ are now in Christ Jesus. This is Paul's explanation of the change that has taken place. The double name is given, and emphasis rests upon "Jesus," in order to show that it is the historical Christ, incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, who has fulfilled the Messianic hope and wrought this change in their state. They have received the promise and laid hold upon the hope. They are in the fellowship of Christ, and therefore former things are passed away and their standing and relations are altogether new.

Ye who formerly were far off.—These words sum up the description of the previous condition of the Gentile believers given in the preceding verse, as it is necessary to carry this along with us in order to appreciate the contrast. Similarly, in ver. 5, the apostle summed up his previous description of the unregenerate character in the phrase "dead in sins."

Are made nigh.—The phrase is chosen to mark the contrast with "far off." This is the immediate result of fellowship with Christ. Those who were without Christ were consequently without God; but now those who are in Christ Jesus are made nigh to God. The Word was with God, and therefore those who are in the Word, vitally united to the manifested Messiah, are also with God. Christ Jesus is the efficient cause of this nearness, which, but for Him, could never have been secured. This is the realisation of the benefits of the Abrahamic covenant. The parties in that covenant were brought nigh to one another. Abraham, and those who by their faith proved themselves heirs of Abraham, were by the terms of the covenant brought nigh to God. In Christ

Jesus the Gentiles became *proselytes* in the true sense; they were *brought over* into participation in covenant blessings.

In the blood of Christ.—The covenant in which the Gentiles are made nigh to God is a covenant of blood, in which the really efficient power for atonement and reconciliation is the blood of the new covenant. There is no essential difference in meaning between the “in the blood” of our text and the “through the blood” of i. 7; but here the use of the preposition “in” connects the last clause of the verse with the first. It is in Christ Jesus that the great reconciliation is wrought, and specifically in His blood. This is a point which Paul urgently insists upon his readers remembering, that all their present blessedness, which forms such a contrast to their miserable past, they owe to Jesus Christ as the crucified.

Vers. 14-16. The apostle first of all presents Christ as, in the fullest and most comprehensive sense, our peace, and then proceeds to distinguish two different forms of the enmity which, in the execution of His office, our peace removes—the enmity between Jews and Gentiles, and the enmity between God and man. In vers. 14, 15, the parties at enmity with one another are Jews and Gentiles, and they are made one, not by Gentiles being made Jews, but by Jews and Gentiles alike being taken out of their several states of existence, and made new creatures in Christ Jesus. Thus Christ, as our peace, abolishes all distinctions among men that separate and keep apart. But this, after all, is itself the consequence of a yet more profound operation of the great Peacemaker. This enmity between Jew and Gentile, according to its ideal significance, represents the existence of enmity between the Gentiles and God, but, according to its actual manifestation, the existence of enmity between man, both Jew and Gentile, and God. Not only the stone-wall barrier between Jew and Gentile, which made the Gentiles relatively to the Jews far off from God, had to be removed, but also the veil which prevented even the Jew having access to the divine presence in the holiest of all. And ver. 16 speaks of the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile to God as that which alone can effectually secure the restoration of unity among men. And as

this reconciliation is accomplished in the cross, so the abolition of distinctions between man and man is accomplished in the blood of Christ and in His flesh. Thus the peace-making in the one case is essentially the same as in the other.—It is also to be noted that while we have the work of Christ on the cross made prominent as that which slew the enmity and reconciled to God, we have also, in ver. 15, recognition of the work of Christ's Spirit in making the new man, which He does in Himself.

Ver. 14. *For HE is our peace.*—The importance of remembering that our enjoyment of the blessings of salvation wholly depends upon our relation to the historical Christ, is shown by the emphasis here laid upon the "He" (*αὐτός*) with which the verse opens. He it is who is our peace. The prominence here given to the power and work of Christ is very noticeable, when viewed in connection with the opening and closing clause of the preceding verse.—Christ is the Prince of peace (Isa. ix. 6), not only as making peace, but also as being peace, in whom, as well as by whom, we have peace. When we keep hold of this truth that He is the peace of those who believe in Him, we are no longer required to answer the question whether the reference is to peace between Jew and Gentile (as Meyer holds), or peace with God (as Hofmann holds). Meyer thinks that his view is necessitated by the context; but when we consider the emphasis that has just been laid upon the blood of Christ, which was certainly shed for no other purpose than to reconcile man to God, it would rather seem that the immediate context favoured the other view. It is better not to say that the primary reference is to one or other aspect of peace, but to the historical Christ, in whom at once the distinction of Jew and Gentile and the enmity that separated from God are done away.

Who made both one.—That this was an immediate result of having Christ as our peace, was shown, even in the preceding clause, by the change from the second personal pronoun to the first. Ye were far off, the apostle had said of the Gentiles, and now ye are made nigh in Him who is *our* peace. He who unites us to God, in doing so by the one act and not by a separate operation, unites us to one another.

There is, therefore, neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, where Christ is all and in all (Col. iii. 11). This accurately describes the one that is created in Christ Jesus as a new creation. The Gentiles are not received as proselytes, as strangers from without who have come over to the Jews. "He does not," says Chrysostom, "mean this, that He hath raised us to that higher dignity of theirs, but that He hath raised both us and them to a yet higher. Only that the blessing to us is greater, because to those it had been promised, and they were nearer than we; to us it had not been promised, and we were farther off than they. He made us one, not by attaching us to them, but by binding both them and us together into one." The new unity is as little Jewish as Gentile. It is a God-made unity, and therefore will be enduring, not subject to any subsequent rupture. God is one, and now in Christ man is at one with God. But this union with Christ is in His blood,—that is, in His cross,—where the flesh was crucified; so that in Him who was dead and is alive again to live for evermore, there is no longer any mention of the flesh, with its distinctions of circumcised and uncircumcised.

And broke down the middle wall of partition.—The middle wall is itself a barrier, and the reduplication is intended to make it certain and conspicuous that the separation that follows from the existence of the wall is not an accidental result of the presence of a wall that might have been placed there with an altogether different purpose. It was put up in order to effect a partition of the parties referred to. It was intended as a hedge or fence to shut in and to shut out. This precisely was the purpose of the law as given to Israel. In Gal. ii. 18 he uses the same phrase "broke down," to describe his treatment of the doctrine of justification by the works of the law. This partition had served its purpose, the exclusiveness of the Jewish dispensation—a certain form and measure of religious development, but it had fulfilled its mission when the Messiah had appeared as the end of the law and the fulfilment of prophecy. To prolong the separation now could only be mischievous, and would frustrate the establishment of the universal kingdom of the Messiah.

Ver. 15. *The enmity*.—This is the explanation of what the partition wall really was. It is in apposition to the preceding clause, and is governed by the same verb “broke down,” or abolished. The apostle here describes in plain language what he had there figuratively expressed. Our exposition of the partition wall shows how this enmity is to be understood. It is the opposition of Jew and Gentile, the hatred and variance occasioned by the existence of a peculiar people in the enjoyment of exclusive privileges. This enmity served an important purpose in the divine economy. In the beginning enmity was put between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman; enmity was put between the Israelites and the wicked Canaanites. The separation effected by the law given by Moses caused the enmity of Jew and Gentile, and then this enmity perpetuated that separation. Christ abolishes the enmity by removing its cause, and lifting those who had been separated into a higher unity in His own fellowship.

In His flesh.—Here the apostle recurs to the thought of the crucified Saviour. He who in His blood is our peace, in His flesh removes the enmity. It seems better to connect the clause with what precedes rather than with what follows. The addition of this clause, just like that of the expression “in the blood of Christ” in ver. 13, raises the whole discourse into a higher sphere, and gives a premonitory hint of the thought, explicitly set forth in the following verse, of that deeper enmity between Jew and Gentile alike and God, which lies at the root of all confusion and dispeace. In regard to their relation to God, while the Gentiles needed to have the middle wall that shut them out from privilege removed, the Jews needed to have the veil taken away; and then, for the one and for the other, by the blood of Jesus there was a new and living way consecrated through His flesh (Heb. x. 19, 20).

Having abolished the law of commandments in authoritative decrees.—In these words the apostle clearly describes and characterises the ceremonial law. Stier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, p. 123, insists that the law referred to here is not exclusively the ceremonial law, but that of Moses generally.

Now it is undoubtedly true that the revealed law, as revealed, was a means of separation. The fact of a supernatural revelation given to one nation, and withheld from all others, gave to that one so favoured, a position of privilege that separated it from all the rest. But what the apostle clearly describes in the laboured and carefully constructed proposition before us, is the part of the Mosaic law which was of temporary validity. Whatever in it was of moral significance was transferred into the law of Christ's kingdom, as part of that word of God which cannot pass away. All that supernatural revelation did for the moral law in the Mosaic legislation, was to utter it in a purer and more complete form than that in which it was expressed elsewhere. The part of it which corresponded to the law written on the heart, as distinguished at once from sinful man's reading of that writing, and from the dispensational ceremonial law, is of eternal obligation, and was absolutely "holy" and "spiritual" (Rom. vii. 12, 14). If the apostle had intended the law generally, he would simply have called it the law; but when he calls it the law, which consists in detailed precepts enforced by external authority, he evidently refers to a particular part of the law—to the law of ceremonial purity, which, by detailed regulations, distinguished clean from unclean, and prohibited all contact with the unclean under threatening of punishment.—This statement corresponds to "having broken down the enmity in his flesh," in the same way that "making both one" corresponds to "breaking down the middle wall of partition." It tells us what is done in order to remove the enmity. The law of commandments in decrees is the middle wall. And so the direct reference here is to the separation of Jews and Gentiles, which was effected by the ceremonial law, and indeed generally by the Mosaic law (though what was moral and therefore of universal obligation in it was more or less perfectly known outside of Israel), as that was given by means of a special revelation. The apostle directs attention to the particularity and multiplicity of the *precepts* (ἐντολαί) of which this law consists, which contributed largely to prevent the realisation of that spiritual unity which it was the design of Christ's work to bring about. These precepts were distinctly dis-

pensational, and from their very nature incapable of universal application ; designed, indeed, for the very purpose of hedging in a particular nation from all other nations besides. Klöpper, who wishes to show that the author of Ephesians is here imitating a passage in his Pauline model (Col. ii. 14), accounts for the absence of this word *ἐντολαί* in Colossians, by saying that its equivalent appears in the “*touch not, taste not, handle not*” of Col. ii. 21. These words undoubtedly indicate the nature of those minute ceremonial decrees. They must be done away, if the limits of Israel are to be overstepped. Something else must take their place if the offer of divine fellowship is to be extended to all men. But that the apostle did not think of effecting this extension by the substitution of any lower or more lax code, is shown by the word which he adds to this already somewhat cumbrous phrase. He shows that this law, fitted though it was to the dispensation under which it was applied, was not the highest conceivable. Just as the Mosaic dispensation gave place to the more spiritual dispensation of Christ (2 Cor. iii. 7–11), there is in this dispensation of the Spirit a higher, mightier principle operating than that law which gave character and distinctiveness to the dispensation of the old covenant. This is brought out by the words “*in authoritative decrees*” (*ἐν δόγμασιν*). This Mosaic law, which consisted in separate precepts (*ἐντολαί*), was imposed by external authority. Each of its precepts was enforced by a decree which, like the utterance of an imperial autocrat, could not be questioned. The law as enjoined upon Israel is thus contrasted, not only with that law written in the hearts of men to which the natural conscience bears witness, but also with that law which, according to God’s promise under the new covenant, would be written in the hearts and on the minds of the true spiritual Israel.—The whole clause, then, describes the law in that form and under that aspect in which it was to be done away. It had served its purpose, but it was utterly unsuited to the new dispensation of the Spirit, for these two reasons : (1) As consisting of a multitude of detailed precepts, and so being incapable of universal application ; and (2) As resting primarily on outward authority rather than commending itself to the consciences and hearts of spiritual men. Its

removal by the crucifying of Christ's flesh secures the removal of the enmity; for it implies the substitution of a higher principle, the person of Christ, who imparts unity unto all who come to Him, and by His Spirit enforces His authority, not by external prescriptions, but by commending Himself to the heart and conscience. In order that we might draw nigh to God, it was necessary that the commandment, which was weak and unprofitable, should be disannulled, that the law, which made nothing perfect, should be abolished in favour of the better hope (Heb. vii. 18, 19). Instead of the law, which consisted of detailed precepts, and rested for its sanction on external authority, we have in Christ this better hope, which is one, and which has its warrant and guarantee from within and not from without. That this spiritual law in its inwardness is far more comprehensive than any code of detailed precepts can ever be, is seen from the exposition of it in the Sermon on the Mount, where the great Teacher shows that His law applies to every thought, and feeling, and desire, as well as to every outward action, of the man. The law of commandment in decrees, which addressed itself exclusively to the Jew, must be abolished, in order that the law of Christ, which appeals to man as man, may be established. The bringing in of the better hope does away with the middle wall of partition, so that Jew and Gentile are made one.

In order that in Himself He might make of the two one new man.—In Col. iii. 10, what is here ascribed to Christ is described as the work of God. But it will be observed that the apostle is here speaking, not of Him whose workmanship the new man is (ver. 10), but of Him in and by whom that operation is carried out which results in the new creature. The regenerate man is God's workmanship, but according to God's plan His image is communicated to those who obtain it through fellowship with Jesus Christ, His express image. We have here the direct object of that breaking down of the middle wall and the making one of Jew and Gentile. They are together lifted into a new and higher sphere of spiritual existence. There are no varieties of the new man. They are all of God, and God is one. This making one can be accomplished only in one way. It is in Christ, by common

participation of His benefits, by the fellowship of His death and resurrection, that a unity of centre and aim is for the first time afforded to all men. And the newness of the new creation consists in this, that it is not the reproduction of Jew or of Gentile, nor yet the production of and being made up of elements common to both of these, but the creation of a new being fashioned after the man Christ Jesus. Hence all distinctions applicable to the old man are utterly foreign to the new. The new man is what his ideal is, for meanwhile he is advancing to the realisation of it; and that ideal is, for all individuals of the new creation, the same, and is reached when every man is presented before God "perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. i. 28).

Making peace.—The recurrence of this word peace with which ver. 14 opened, is intended to keep prominently in view the great object of Christ's work. The confusion wrought by sin was everywhere. In the history of our race, it was soon made evident that sin, which separates from God, who alone is one and therefore is the only possible centre of unity, must immediately and inevitably cause strife and disunion among men. What man needed was peace, procurable only by the removal of sin—the cause of its disappearance. He, therefore, who came to bless man, to deal with his distress, must reveal Himself as the maker and introducer of peace,—making it by His death on the cross, and introducing it into the hearts and lives of men by His Spirit.—The peace formally referred to here is that between Jew and Gentile, for the making of peace between man and God is only introduced expressly in the next verse; but the use of the present participle here, attached to the immediately preceding clause, is meant, like the "*He is our peace*" of ver. 14, to emphasise the fact of the abiding activity of Christ as in Himself and in His work the source of our peace.

Ver. 16. *And that He might reconcile both in one body unto God through the cross.*—This, together with the latter part of the preceding verse, indicates the design Christ had in breaking down the middle wall and abolishing the ceremonial law. This new creation—in which Jews and Gentiles, sundered hitherto, escape from their mutual enmity and are at peace—is

also the sphere in which those who are at one with each other are at one with God. The nature of the discussion had required the presentation first of the peace that was introduced between Jew and Gentile, but peace between man and God really lay at the foundation of all. The apostle's previous conclusions regarding the abolition of all distinctions between man and man before God, are of importance only as clearing the way for the carrying out of this grand design of Christ's work. The barrier between Jew and Gentile has been removed, so that both may be reconciled to God. The word *reconcile*, in the form in which it appears in our text (*ἀποκαταλλάσσειν*), occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in Col. i. 20, 21; but the simpler form of the verb, wanting the *ἀπο*, occurs also in a similar sense in 2 Cor. v. 18-20; 1 Cor. vii. 11; Rom. v. 8, 10. The question has been raised, whether the word used in Ephesians and Colossians is merely an intensified form of the simpler word, or whether it implies restoration to an original unity that had been broken. Meyer is inclined to favour the former view, and Calvin, Ellicott, Lightfoot, and Weiss hold decidedly by the latter. That the double compound is used with careful discrimination in Ephesians and Colossians, in order to remind the readers that the state of enmity was one into which man had passed out of a primal condition of peace, is surely unquestionable; but this I should be inclined to regard as an intensifying, in the most powerful way conceivable, of the idea of reconciliation, which not merely brings together those who had been at enmity among themselves in a new peaceful relation to God, but restores both to a primal harmony with one another and with God, which had long been hidden from view. Reconciliation means a change from a hostile to a friendly relationship. The passive verb is used of those who are brought over from a hostile to a friendly attitude. The woman who had left her husband, and thus made the breach, is to be reconciled by returning to him whom she had left (1 Cor. vii. 11). The active verb is used of him who brings about this change and makes peace. In the classical passage, 2 Cor. v. 18-20, we have God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, while those who were enemies by their wicked works are entreated

to be reconciled. Now, it was undoubtedly man who put himself at enmity with God by entering into fellowship with sin. The presence of sin in man created in him that carnal mind which is enmity against God (Rom. viii. 7). When this enmity was taken out of the heart, undoubtedly the man was reconciled to God. It is upon this aspect of the truth that stress is laid, by those who would substitute a restoration to the fellowship of God for a real atonement through which man is reconciled to God, on the basis of God's reconciliation of Himself in Christ with man. But that is only one side of the truth, and that distinctly the secondary and subsidiary. When man, by entering into fellowship with sin, made himself an enemy with God, by doing so he called forth the wrath of God against him, and so placed himself under God's curse. This divine enmity, occasioned by the human enmity, could be removed only by a reconciliation that provides for the removal of its cause. And so, when God in Christ dealt with sin, and by the sin-offering of Christ destroyed sin, He thereby destroyed the enmity and reconciled the world to Himself. The destruction of the enmity in man was the reconciliation, but this was God's work and not man's. Man had made himself an enemy of God, but he could not undo the enmity, and this God did in the cross of Christ. It is God's reconciliation which man receives (Rom. v. 11). Whatever man can or may do follows only as a consequence of the divine act. Reconciliation, though between two, is not wrought mutually as the act of both. Biedermann's representation of the Scripture doctrine of the atonement, as beginning with man, who gives up his hostile attitude toward God, and followed up on God's part by His abandoning of His wrath, is altogether contrary to the teaching of Paul. Not God and man jointly, but God alone, reconciles. And nowhere more distinctly than in our text is reconciliation set forth as solely and distinctively the work of God. The Pauline doctrine of reconciliation is summed up in a thoroughly sound and satisfactory manner by Usteri, *Entwicklung des Paulinischen Lehrbegriffes* (Zur. 1851), p. 106: "The idea of *καταλλαγή* is not to be understood of something that takes place in God quite objectively as

expiatio, and just as little does it mean something merely subjective which men produce out of themselves; but it is at once objective and subjective. The *καταλλαγή* proceeds from God: He is the reconciler, and so is active therein; Christ is mediator of the gracious gift, men the receivers, who in so far are passive; but it does not take place apart from *πίστις*, a personal act, which indeed is a minimum in comparison with what God and Christ have already done; but it is yet a necessary condition, as appears from the imperative, 'Be ye reconciled' (2 Cor. v. 20)." The Pauline doctrine of reconciliation is also admirably stated by Weiss, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, i. 428-430. The doctrine of reconciliation set before us by the writer of Ephesians is in no single particular different from that of the writer of Romans and Corinthians. In Rom. v. 10, this reconciliation is said to be effected by the death of the Son of God. In 2 Cor. v. 18, 21, it is said that God hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, whom He made to be sin for us. And in Col. i. 20, God reconciles all things to Himself by Christ, through the blood of the cross. In Ephesians, the reconciliation is effected through the cross. The closest relationship possible exists between the Colossian and the Ephesian passages. Pfleiderer, however, maintains that though the language of Ephesians is a studied imitation of that of Colossians, the ideas are essentially different (*Paulinism*, ii. 178-181). He maintains that, while in Colossians the enmity to be reconciled by the death of Christ consists in the estrangement of the world, and especially of the Gentile Christians, from God, in Ephesians the enemies to be reconciled are the Gentiles and the Jews. A careful examination of the whole passage will, on the contrary, show that, while prominence has been given to the abolition of all exclusive privilege, it was only in order that it might be seen how the reconciliation with God, which both needed, was available for both. That the thought of Jew and Gentile was still present to the writer, is clear from his use of the word "both," but his substitution of this term for the "two" of the preceding verse implies their comprehension already under one category, so that conceived of together, and not

apart, their reconciliation is not now with one another but with God ($\tau\hat{\omega}$ $\Theta\epsilon\hat{\omega}$).—The question still remains as to the parties for whom this reconciliation was wrought. Our understanding of the term “both,”—as meaning Jew and Gentile together, embracing all men, the whole world as standing in need of being reconciled,—supplies an answer to the question. The difficulty which has been felt by some arises with the words “in one body.” The reference is not to the crucified body of Christ; for the apostle proceeds to indicate the part performed by the death upon the cross. It is the crucifixion of Christ’s body that accomplishes the reconciliation, which involves the inclusion of the reconciled in one body. The terminology must be understood in accordance with that of the whole section. Just as the “one new man” is related to the “two,” so also is the “one body” related to the “both” of our text; the one body, therefore, is the new community into which both Jews and Gentiles are brought through the cross. There is no longer a Jewish Church and a Gentile Church, nor even a Church consisting of Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, but all the members of this community are raised out of party distractions and conflicts through their membership in this one body,—the mystical body of Christ,—into which they are brought by Christ’s atoning death. “It is,” says Chrysostom, “like persons being in a house, with two chambers below, and one large and grand one above; they would not be able to see each other till they had got above.” It is therefore wrong to say with Ritschl, that this reconciliation is for the community. The apostle does not assume that the community is formed, that the two are first of all combined in one body, and then the reconciliation is wrought. Rather this combination of Jew and Gentile in the one body is regarded as an element in this reconciliation. In Christ’s death Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God and to one another, not in successive stages or by separate acts, but that which unites both to God unites also the one to the other. The forming of the community, the creating of the Church as the body of Christ, is not a preliminary to, but an integral element in, the reconciliation of God and men.

Having slain the enmity in it.—What is here described preceded the reconciliation spoken of in the last clause, not in order of time, but in order of thought. Christ reconciles us in His cross to God, but this involves or implies that the old enmity, which had separated Jews and Gentiles hitherto, has been abolished. Thus the enmity spoken of here is the same as that spoken of in ver. 15, that which existed between Jew and Gentile. It seems strange that any expositor should ever have thought that it could be used of the feeling entertained by God with reference to man. It is altogether unscriptural and offensive to the pious consciousness, to speak of God as entertaining a feeling of enmity against any of His creatures. There is wrath in God against sin, and God is angry with the sinner; but it is only the relation of man as a sinner toward God that can be described as one of enmity. Then, again, the enmity of our text cannot be, as Harless, Hofmann, and others understand it, the hostility of men, Jews and Gentiles, against God, nor even, as Ellicott supposes, primarily this hostility, and secondarily also that between Jew and Gentile; for the apostle is not in this section referring to the reconciliation of man to God, by the removal of the enmity that is in man's heart, but of the removal of God's anger because of sin, by the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ on the cross.—This destruction of the enmity is described as having been accomplished on the cross. Hofmann, who insists that this latter clause of the verse should begin with "through the cross," on which, rather than upon "having slain," he thinks the emphasis should be laid, is obliged to understand "in it" (*ἐν αὐτῷ*), not of the cross, but of the "one body." But, notwithstanding Hofmann's assertion to the contrary, it seems difficult in that case to understand the body in any other sense than that of the crucified body of Christ, which, as we have seen and as Hofmann allows, is unsuitable in this place.

Ver. 17. *And having come, preached peace to you the far off, and peace to the near.*—This statement takes us back again to the 14th verse. After setting down there the main proposition: He (*αὐτὸς*) is our peace, as the ground of his previous statement (ver. 13), that those who had been far off were made

nigh, the apostle had, by several subordinate clauses (vers. 14–16), explained how Christ had performed His office of Peacemaker, and secured to Himself unchallengeable title to the name, Our Peace; and now he resumes, from the point gained in the first clause of ver. 14, by saying that He who *is* our peace came also to proclaim that peace. This peace is not merely peace between Jew and Gentile, but is that which both Jew and Gentile needed. And seeing that the need of Jews and Gentiles was the same, namely, to be brought near God, or, as ver. 18 puts it, to obtain access unto the Father, the message preached to the one and to the other was the same. This was really the way in which the separation of Jew and Gentile was abolished, when to both the same gospel was preached, the same message of peace delivered. Before the coming of Christ, there were those who were far off, and others who were relatively near; but when He preached peace to both, that distinction ceased.—Many have felt the difficulty of applying these words directly to Christ, inasmuch as His own personal ministry did not extend beyond the limits of Israel, so that He consequently preached only to the near. Hence Ambrose among the fathers, and Calvin with most of the reformed commentators, refer them to the preaching of the apostles as the legates and representatives of Christ. The evident connection, however, of this clause with the opening words of ver. 14, would seem to make it absolutely necessary to refer them to Christ's own personal act, and not to that of any representatives. Harless refers to two passages (2 Cor. xiii. 3; Acts x. 36) to prove that if any one is thought of as acting in and through another, that other is named. So here, if the preaching were that of the apostles, it would have been said, "He who is our peace came in the person of His apostles, and preached peace." But really no difficulty need be felt in speaking of the proclamation of peace to all men, Jews and Gentiles, as the preaching of Christ at His coming. In the synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus, in the language of Scripture, which He declared to be that very day fulfilled, proclaimed in the very forefront of the programme of His work His preaching of the gospel to the poor (Luke iv. 18–21). Whether this scene actually occurred

at the beginning of Christ's ministry, or at a subsequent period, it is admitted by all evangelical expositors that "no better motto could be found for that ministry than the prophetic oracle read in the synagogue of Nazareth" (Bruce, *Galilean Gospel*, p. 36). "It is a worthy frontispiece, in respect both of the *grace* and of the *universality* of the gospel" (p. 31). He preached His gospel to the poor, to all who needed it; and, seeing that need of peace on the part of man was the only motive of His bringing it, the far-off are mentioned before the near. This was the message which Christ's preaching proclaimed from the very first. The message would not be worthy of His coming, if, when He came, He had only something less than this to preach.

Ver. 18. *For through Him we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father.*—What man needed, Jew and Gentile alike, was access to God. Now that it was clearly understood that man's salvation meant his restoration to God's favour and fellowship, the comparative nearness of the Jews, as contrasted with the far-off Gentiles, was a very small thing. It was of no account at all, and so the distinction is blotted out. Facts have proved that both Jews and Gentiles are all under Him (Rom. iii. 9). Both are separated from God, and so long as the gulf is not bridged, measurements of distance are of no consequence. What both need is access to the Father. It should be noticed that access to God is regarded as the equivalent of that peace spoken of in the preceding verse. And the access is to God as Father, to whom we owe our being, and in whom our being finds satisfaction. When we are brought to God so as to recognise Him as Father, so as to realise and know the privileges and obligations of the relationship, we are at peace.—This access to the Father we have through Christ. The Apostle Peter uses the same word as is here employed, when he says, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He *might give us access* to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18). What is said in ver. 13 to be accomplished "by the blood of Christ," is here said to be "through Him." The emphasis is only on these opening words. The salvation is one for all, and makes all one, because it comes through one channel, and by the one divine

Person. "No man cometh to the Father but by me" (John xiv. 6). It is Christ's atoning death that prepares for us the way to God—the way that is through His flesh (Heb. x. 19–22).—"Dost thou not know how to appear before God, or to come to Him? Come first to Christ, and He will take thee by the hand, and go along with thee, and lead thee to His Father" (Goodwin, *Works*, iv. 89).—Then, again, this access through the Son to the Father is mediated by the Spirit. This verse is one of the most satisfactory Trinitarian texts in the New Testament. As Phillips Brooks puts it, in an able sermon on this text, "We have here man's salvation described as having its end in the Father, unto whom we have access, its method through the Son, and its power in the Holy Spirit." Clearly this "in one Spirit" is not to be connected with "both," as indicating the spiritual unity of those brought by the Son to the Father; but with the words "we have access," as indicating the influence by which we are moved on the way to God. This moving power is the Spirit of Christ. The death of Christ is the making of the way, and the Holy Spirit's influence is the moving principle by which we are led and enabled to make use of the way. The access spoken of is a continued fact in the life of man. It is not an introduction followed by a withdrawal. We came before God, and we remain with Him, in the same spiritual atmosphere, inspired by His Spirit, animated by the Spirit of holiness. He who enjoys access unto the Father has been justified by the blood of Christ, and is being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. The continuousness of the access which we have (*ἔχομεν*, *we are having*) unto the Holy Father, implies the continuous sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit is sent into our hearts by Father and Son; and it is the continued indwelling of this Spirit in us, which enables us to call God Father (Rom. viii. 15), and to retain our position as His sons.

Vers. 19–22. The apostle now proceeds to sum up, by way of conclusion from all that he has said, the privileges of those who have been brought nigh. He does not in those verses go back upon the old distinction of Jew and Gentile, which, as he has just shown, has for ever ceased. It is the entire

new community in Christ Jesus of which he now speaks, who before had not that access unto the Father, which now, through Christ's death, they have in His Spirit.

Ver. 19. *So then ye are no longer strangers and foreigners.*—The apostle does not linger over the description of their earlier condition. He has already drawn out a description in detail of the state of the Gentiles out of Christ in ver. 12, and now he merely suggests a reminiscence of it with a wider application to all, both Jews and Gentiles, before they had believed in Christ. His only object now is to give point to the description, on which he desires to enlarge, of the privileges of their position as Christians, in relation to the things of God and His kingdom. All that he has to say of the past he sums up in two words: *strangers* and *foreigners*. Strangers (ξένοι) are those who find themselves among a people not their own. The old classical usage of the word points them out as those to whom hospitality might be shown. Those Ephesian Christians, before they had believed in Christ, were not of the people of God. Foreigners (πάροικοι) are those who find themselves in a place that is not their own country. They are without civil rights, without citizenship, sojourners in a strange land, where they have not been naturalised.

But ye are fellow-citizens of the saints, and members of the household of God.—The verb is here repeated for the sake of emphasis, and to show that what follows is the principal proposition.—Here we have a concise description of the position of believers in Christ, in respect of their relation to God. Only those have access to God who are under the influence of His Holy Spirit. The saints are those who stand before God, and are at peace with Him. They are those out of all nations and of all ages who have washed their robes and made them white. By faith in Christ they are brought into this fellowship. It was by this very title that the apostle greeted the Ephesian believers in the opening words of the epistle. They are now reckoned among the saints, but this they owe to Christ, for all that is saintly in them has been wrought in them by the Spirit of Christ. Holiness is that which characterises all the citizens of the city of God, into which everything that is glorious and pure is being gathered.

To be made sharers of this citizenship is to have been made nigh by the blood of Christ. "Were there a way by which worldly men, as worldly men, could enter the divine city, they would find themselves humiliatingly and wretchedly out of their element. Could any of us gain admission to it in our own nature and spirit, the loneliest sense of being strangers and foreigners would seize and oppress us. But if we are quickened together with Christ, and one nature and spirit with Him, we shall be perfectly at home with all its multitudes" (Pulsford, *Christ and His Seed*, pp. 81, 82). Then, again, this city of God is described under the figure of God's household. Its citizens are not merely related to God, as subjects who derive from Him laws and ordinances, and who yield to Him homage and obedience, but they are related to Him as members of His family (*οἰκεῖται τοῦ θεοῦ*). Those who had been homeless in a strange land are now at home in the household of God.

Ver. 20. *Built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets.*—The thought of God's household suggests the idea of God's house. Believers in Christ belong to that household as integral portions of that glorious palace which God has reared as a dwelling-place for Himself. Collectively they are His "spiritual house," of which they are individually the "living stones" (1 Pet. ii. 5). The house is "built up" by successive additions; but all these, if they are to be actual portions of the building, must be laid upon the foundation. We have here two points of interest to examine—(1) Who are the apostles and prophets referred to; and (2) In what sense are they the foundation of the house of God?—We may say at once that "prophets" here evidently mean New Testament and not Old Testament prophets. The reference to Old Testament prophets would at this point be utterly out of place, since the writer has now transcended the distinction of Jew and Gentile, and could not thus fall back upon a peculiarity of a dispensation that was already finally closed. And even had this been allowable, the prophets would in that case certainly have been named before the apostles. The prophets of the apostolic age were closely joined to the apostles (1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11). Both alike were itinerants; the

special function of the prophets being to follow up immediately the work of the apostles. It was the duty of the prophet to edify, counsel, and comfort those who had received the message of truth (1 Cor. xiv. 3). The prophet was therefore the closely attached assistant of the apostle, and the work of both lay among the young Christian communities. The apostle, if opportunity was given, might do the work of the prophet. Under the old dispensation, the pair of functionaries that answered to the New Testament apostles and prophets, were that of lawgiver and prophet. The lawgiver was also prophet, and the other prophets were the expounders of the law whose inspired expositions were God's own interpretation of His law, in application to the circumstances and requirements of the particular age. What was characteristic of New Testament apostles and prophets was their immediate divine inspiration, which, in the form of supernatural gifts or charisms, was granted them for the use of the Church in the early days of its history. This inspiration fitted them for discovering the future, where the knowledge of it was needed for the spiritual development of the Church. So Agabus of Jerusalem, at Antioch, foretold the coming famine, in order that the saints might be in a position to make provision for those who would be in distress (Acts xi. 27). Those, then, who in the beginnings of Christianity, as directly called of God, had to do with the founding of churches, are here described as the foundation on which the believing community is built up.—The more serious question remains, as to the sense in which we must take the word "foundation" in our text. The generally accepted explanation is, that this foundation consists of the system of doctrine proclaimed by these founders of churches. The foundation, according to this theory, is not the apostles and prophets, but that laid by them. So Harless, Meyer, Ellicott, Beet, Moule. This interpretation makes the statement easy, and brings it into literal accord with 1 Cor. iii. 11. But against this reading of the passage, Hofmann has called attention to the improbability of a doctrine, and not rather persons, being intended here, seeing that the person of Jesus Christ is spoken of as the corner-stone, and the persons of believers as the stones con-

stituting the building. And then, again, Klöpper¹ points out that, in the following participial clause, Jesus Christ is not said to *lay* but to *be* the corner-stone, and that correspondingly we should here expect it to be said, not that the apostles and prophets laid, but that they are the foundation of the Church. Is it scriptural, is it consistent with the Scripture statements, to call apostles the foundation of the Church? In 2 Tim. ii. 19 we read, "The firm foundation of God standeth," where undoubtedly the true elect of God are intended, who resist all temptations to unfaithfulness. It is God's foundation, laid by Him and not by man. Other foundation can no man lay, foundation laying is not man's work. And so in regard to Christ it is said that God laid Him as a sure foundation (Isa. xxviii. 16), and the making of Him the chief corner-stone is the Lord's doing (Ps. cxviii. 22, 23). In His eternal counsels His own elect are included in the sureness of this foundation. The figure, as physical, is not adequate to unfold the fulness of the spiritual reality. Each stone, by contact with the one living stone, becomes instinct with the same life. But, in the building up, a special rank is given to those who have been, by immediate divine calling and inspiration, His witnesses unto all besides. They, in fellowship with Christ, as forming the first layer, are called the foundation, as the apocalyptic seer beheld on the foundations of the wall of the city of God the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (Rev. xxi. 14).

Its head corner-stone being Christ Jesus.—This foundation, consisting of living persons, is made one and sure by being knit together in Christ. He is corner-stone of the foundation. To join the *αὐτοῦ* to Christ Jesus, and translate "Christ Jesus Himself," is to make quite a useless addition to the name. What we want to know is how the apostles and prophets came to get such a position in the house of God, and the purpose of this clause is to show that they owe their position to Christ. We therefore join *αὐτοῦ* to

¹ We cannot, however, regard Klöpper as successful in his attempt to show that the prophets here meant are the Old Testament prophets. He thinks that the foundation, consisting of the representatives of the covenants of promise, and of the preachers of its fulfilment, is peculiarly suitable for a community that comprehends believers from among the Jews and Gentiles.

θέμελιον, and render, "The head corner-stone of the foundation." In the LXX., which seems to have been before the apostle, Isa. xxviii. 16 is rendered, "I lay *among the foundations* of Zion a stone," etc. (ἐγὼ ἐμβάλλω εἰς τὰ θεμέλια Σιών λίθον). No apostle or prophet could ever be called the foundation-stone of the Church, or of any Church. Apostles and prophets are the foundation (θέμελιον not θεμέλιοι λίθοι). The only being who can be called foundation-stone is Jesus Christ; but He is here considered not as the foundation-stone but as the corner-stone, and to speak of Him in connection with our text as foundation-stone is to confuse the apostolic figure. As His immediate representatives, apostles and prophets form the foundation. This dignity they owe to Him. He is the corner-stone which binds them together into a foundation, wanting which they would simply be detached and useless stones. Hence the idea of foundation is not far away; and though not here expressed, yet in Isa. xxviii. 16 the corner-stone of the foundation is *par excellence* the foundation-stone. The idea of the apostle is not that of a corner-stone binding two walls together, so as to bring in again the harmonious union of Jew and Gentile, but that of an indispensable and all-essential centre of the foundation on which all else is reared. We have therefore here the apostle's reason for assuring the believing Ephesians that they were recognised as members of God's household; for Christ, in whom they have believed, is the corner-stone in God's spiritual house.

Ver. 21. *In whom each building being fitly joined together groweth into a Temple holy in the Lord.*—The reference now is not directly to the figure of the corner-stone, but to Him who is represented by it, Christ Jesus; not "in which" but "in whom." It depends upon our vital union with Him whether the figure of the spiritual building is applicable to us, if thus in Him we may be individually compared to a building in process of construction, in which each component part is receiving its own place. It is not altogether impossible to render *πᾶσα οἰκοδομή* as our Authorised Version, Ellicott, etc., do by "all the building," but undoubtedly we should, for such a rendering, expect *πᾶσα ἡ οἰκοδομή*. The argument 'against

such a rendering is concisely and convincingly stated by Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, ii. 65. After showing that no example of such a use of *πάς* anarthrous has been produced, he refers to our passage. "It is strange that no one has adduced Eph. ii. 21, where *πάντα οἰκοδομή* is the best supported reading; but even though this reading be accepted, the context (especially *συνοικοδομεῖσθε*) shows that many *οἰκοδομαί* are required to make up the one temple (comp. Matt. xxiv. 1; Mark xiii. 1, 2), and that, therefore, 'every building' is the right rendering." It has been usual to understand each building of particular churches, but there has been no reference in the context to separate local communities, such as would be required to justify the introduction here of such an idea. Nor do we find anywhere in the New Testament the figure of a building applied to a local church. In the only other passages in the New Testament in which the word *οἰκοδομή* is used in the sense of a spiritual building, it is applied either to the spiritual body that forms the residence of the disembodied spirit of the redeemed (2 Cor. v. 1), or to the individual believer in Christ who is described as God's building (1 Cor. iii. 9). It should also be observed that in other passages (1 Cor. xiv. 12; Eph. iv. 12-16, etc.), where the word means *edification*, the Church that is edified can only mean the individual members of the Church. This sense admirably suits the purpose of the apostle in our text. In Christ each believer is having the various parts of his being brought into their proper places, and developed in their right proportions. The growth of each depends upon his *being joined together* with others in the Lord (*συναρμολογούμενων*, used only here and in chap. iv. 16, of a process of union now going on). The present condition of each building is that of an incomplete, unfinished structure; but when completed it will exactly fit into its place in God's plan, having grown exactly in those directions and in that degree required. Each building, when completed, will be a living stone. God's great temple is to be constructed of living stones, each believer having his place according to his life of faith, and not as a mere integral part of any local community or church. The walls of God's temple are not built in sections, which are

then lifted into their places, but they are built up stone by stone. Fitness for occupying their own place in this glorious structure, is the end which all God's work on the individual members of His Church seeks to accomplish. The city of God and the house of God are co-extensive; he who has citizenship in the one has membership and place in the other. There is no need of assuming that the apostle had before him the thought, either of the temple of the Ephesian Diana, or the temple of Jerusalem. Apart from all reference to particular temples, the figure here used is a natural one. There seems no ground for the theory of Mr. Chase (*Expositor*, 3rd Series, iv. 318), nor anything to be gained from it, that Paul here uses *ναός*, where he might have been expected to use *ἱερόν* (as in Matt. xxiv. 1), to indicate that, because of the breaking down of the middle wall of partition, there was no longer the distinction of outer and inner courts, but all had access to the innermost shrine. The fact is unquestionable, that it is one temple in which all living stones will find place, but the statement has been already made, that all have access by Christ to the Father, and this, though necessarily presupposed, is not here again emphasised. The holiness of the temple results from its being the Lord's, and being built up in Him.

Hence the last words of the verse, "in the Lord," are joined immediately with "holy." He, therefore, who has access to the Father through the Son, in the Holy Spirit, has his place in the temple that is holy in the Lord.

Ver. 22. *In whom ye also are built up into a habitation of God in the Spirit.*—We have here the second relative clause attached to ver. 20, introduced in the same way as the former clause. As it is in Christ that each individual believer is fitted for his place in the house of God, the apostle renders his statement more impressive by giving the same declaration an immediately personal application. He reminds them of their calling as believers and saints. What is new here is the description of the divine residence in men as a reality and not a figure. The designation "temple" (*ναός*) had an air of remoteness about it, and a suggestion of formal and occasional appearances and manifestations; but the word "habitation" (*κατοικητήριον*, not elsewhere used by Paul) indicates a place

of continued residence, a place of constant abode. And this is further explained by the description of its suitability for divine residence, because of its spiritual quality. It is under the influence of the Holy Spirit, that those who are built up in Christ become a fit habitation for God the Father.

In the twelve verses of this section we are told the story of grace, what it has done for the Gentiles, and how it has made all earlier distinctions disappear, so that they are no longer thought of as Gentiles, but only as believers in Jesus Christ. The doctrines set forth are mainly two: (1) *The doctrine of reconciliation* (vers. 11–18), where we have the redemptive activity of the three Persons of the Trinity explicitly stated in ver. 18, and implied throughout; for it is to God that men have to be reconciled, since they are, by reason of sin, estranged from and at enmity with Him, and this can be accomplished only by the death of Christ, who makes peace by His blood, which we can share only as we are influenced and controlled by His Holy Spirit: (2) *The blessedness of the reconciled* (vers. 19–22), where again the mystery of the Trinity underlies the doctrinal exposition; for we are built up in Christ Jesus as a temple of God, for whose indwelling we are fitted by the inward influence and power of the Holy Spirit.

(2) *God's grace toward Paul as Apostle of the Gentiles*
(chap. iii. 1–13).

Ver. 1. *For this cause am I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.*—There are two possible views of the construction of this clause, one or other of which we must adopt. The Syriac translator and Chrysostom, followed by many ancients and moderns, including Meyer, simply supplied the substantive verb so as to read, “I, Paul, am the prisoner,” etc. The other theory, which declines to supply anything, and regards the construction as here broken off, to be resumed at ver. 8, or ver. 13, or ver. 14, or at chap. iv. 1, was first of all stated by Theodoret, and has been adopted by many distinguished exegetes of earlier and later times, among others by Luther and Bengel, Harless, Olshausen, Ellicott, and Eadie, Klöpper and Beck. This notion of a broken construc-

tion resumed somewhere or other, or even (as Baumgarten-Crusius supposes) not resumed at all, should evidently be resorted to only as a desperate expedient. It is decidedly the current view among interpreters, because it has seemed impossible to find in the immediate context anything that Paul did answering to the "for this cause" by which the present statement is introduced. If we shall find ourselves obliged thus to understand the clause, then the style is distinctly not Pauline, and is not to be paralleled by the parenthetical passages that occur in other epistles. The omission of the substantive verb in a clause like this is quite common in the writings of Paul and throughout the New Testament. We unhesitatingly adopt the translation given above.—"For this cause" refers to the immediately preceding context, and calls attention to the fact that his present imprisonment is the consequence of his devotion to the spiritual interests of the Gentiles. Now, if we consider the circumstances of the apostle's arrest at Jerusalem, we see at once how appropriate such an account of his present circumstances is. He was first of all mobbed in the temple, on a charge of bringing Gentiles into that holy place (Acts xxi. 29), a story originating, no doubt, from his well-known interest in the Gentiles; and then, when he was allowed to address the crowd, he was listened to until he had reported the terms of his commission from God, "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (Acts xxii. 21). Thus Paul could declare that, in a very literal and exact sense, he was prisoner for the Gentiles. Then, again, this record of Paul's devotedness to the interests of the Gentiles naturally follows the preceding section (ii. 11-22), which describes what grace has done for them. His imprisonment on account of the stand he has taken on their behalf is a historical fact, and he is not ashamed. He is suffering in a good cause. Those Gentiles who have been blessed by that gospel, for the preaching of which to them Paul is now a prisoner, know that the benefit brought to them is unspeakably great. Hence Paul says exultantly, "For this cause am I prisoner." This also naturally accounts for the direction which the apostle's thought takes in the following

verses. He lingers over the thought of his special commission, so that those who have been blessed through him may understand and press on to secure full possession of that grace of God of which he is the minister.—Paul here calls himself “the prisoner of Jesus Christ.” He regards himself under all circumstances and at all times as the property of Christ. “I am Christ’s, and this holds true whether I am bond or free, whether I am going about founding and confirming churches or lying in bonds upon a prison floor.” He is now a prisoner, just because he is Christ’s property. Had he not confessed his Master, and occupied himself proclaiming the special message on behalf of the Gentiles which had been given him, he would not now have been a prisoner. It was the conviction that he belonged to Christ that made him persistent in preaching everywhere that gospel, which was to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness. As Christ’s servant he preached to the Gentiles, and for his service to the Gentiles he is imprisoned; but while the immediate cause of his imprisonment is the work he has been doing among the Gentiles, he goes back to the fundamental point that it is as the Lord’s that he is prisoner for them. This is a thoroughly Pauline style of thought and expression. So in 1 Cor. ix. 23, where he has shown how he sought to mould and fashion his life for the spiritual benefit of all men, he declares that all is done under the constraining influence of a higher end, for he does this “for the gospel’s sake.” It is not he who is the champion of the spiritual rights of the Gentiles, but Jesus Christ, whose he is and whom he serves. Thus the thought of the closing verses of the last chapter is carried on into this new section. All their spiritual privileges they owe to Christ, and possess in Christ. Whatever Paul has done for them, whatever comfort and help his preaching has brought them, must also be reckoned to Christ. For who is Paul? He answers, “I am Jesus Christ’s.”

Ver. 2. *If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which was given me to you ward.*—This is a passage that has been very frequently quoted in favour of the idea that the epistle is addressed to readers who had never been visited by the writer, and were not personally known to him. Many

have understood the words, "if ye have heard," as implying a doubt as to whether the fact of Paul's special commission as Apostle to the Gentiles had ever been even reported to these people. Even with this interpretation, some have supposed it possible still to maintain the Ephesian destination of the epistle. Calvin says, "There is reason to believe that while Paul was at Ephesus he had said nothing on these subjects, no necessity for doing so having arisen; for no controversy had taken place among them about the calling of the Gentiles. If he had made any mention of them in his discourses, he would have reminded the Ephesians of his former statements, instead of referring generally, as he now does, to common report and to his own epistle." We do not seem to have any reason to believe what is here assumed. In a community like that of Ephesus, where the Christian Church consisted largely of a Gentile element, with a very considerable number of Jewish converts, and an actively hostile Jewish community outside, those were questions which, from the first, must have been well to the front. But we do not see that the words before us contain a general reference to common report. The hearing spoken of is knowledge, in whatsoever way it may have been obtained. Almost all who read the passage as Calvin does, regard the assumption of ignorance on the part of the readers respecting Paul's special commission, as evidence that the Ephesians were not the readers or that Paul was not the writer. But this understanding of the conditional particle is absolutely erroneous. In all the passages in the New Testament where this particle occurs (2 Cor. v. 3; Gal. iii. 4; Eph. iv. 21; Col. i. 23), as well as in our text, there is no doubt implied, but a very positive expectation of an affirmative answer, "If, as I am sure is the case."¹ This hypothetical way of putting it is intended to give a peculiarly strong expression to the fact that what he is about to mention is something very familiar to them, which he mentions now only that his readers, by

¹ See Winer, *Treatise on the Grammar of the New Testament Greek*, p. 561, Edin. 1882; Grimm, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 111, Edin. 1886; Lightfoot, *Commentary on Galatians*, 10th ed., p. 135, 1890. Meyer and Ellicott hold that not the particle alone but the context determines whether doubt be altogether absent.

keeping it directly in view, may feel how authoritatively he can speak about their privileges in the gospel and their standing before God. And even if this were not decisive, the context, unless strained and twisted for a purpose, makes it evident that the writer does not assume the possibility of his readers being ignorant of these things. We surely cannot conceive of a Gentile Christian community, in which such attainments had been made as would render the members capable of appreciating such an epistle as this, being ignorant of the grounds on which the very hope of their calling rested. In the sense of a strong assertion of their knowledge of his calling as the Apostle of the Gentiles, this verse is closely linked on to the preceding verse. Paul, who is Christ's, is prisoner on their behalf, as they must very well know, considering all that they had been taught of God's love for sinners and of the provision that He had made for all, making no difference between Jew and Gentile.

"*The dispensation of the grace of God*" is that economy or scheme which is contrived for the exhibition or manifestation of the grace of God. In the Old Testament dispensation God's grace was certainly shown, but the limited range of its application showed that the dispensation represented an early stage in the development. The dispensation in which those limits were removed, was certainly one that more adequately corresponded to the character of God's grace. The gospel which is suited alike to Jew and Gentile, and is offered with equal freedom to both, as compared with earlier dispensations, and when regarded as the final dispensation, is rightly designated the dispensation of the grace of God. This word rendered dispensation, our own word "economy," literally means "the law of the house." Laying hold upon this idea, Graham¹ very beautifully sets forth the meaning and connection of our text: "Ye have heard that God is forming His house, His living temple; and the law of the heavenly architecture is, that Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, good and bad, should be built up and cemented together by faith and love, under one Head, Jesus Christ. This I am commissioned to proclaim to the world, and this is the dispensa-

¹ Graham, *Lectures on St. Paul's Epistles to the Ephesians*, p. 154.

tion of grace which is given me for your sakes." This dispensation, therefore, is not, as Meyer and Ellicott and most expositors maintain, the special grace given to Paul in giving him the distinctive calling as Apostle of the Gentiles. The "law of the house" is no peculiar grace with which God has favoured Paul as the special administrator. It is in its fullest sense the New Testament or gospel dispensation.¹ If the commentators' meaning had been that of the apostle, he would have said, not "the dispensation of the grace," but "the grace given me of God in the dispensation." What marks out the special distinction of Paul is, that he has been made the pioneer in proclaiming this dispensation to the Gentiles. "It was given me," he says, "to you ward." Peter and Paul alike had to do with the administration of the gospel of the grace of God, but while Peter was not restrained from declaring it to the Gentiles, nor Paul from declaring it to the Jews, they were called respectively as ministers of the circumcision and the uncircumcision. The dispensation of God's grace was given to both; but they could say, respectively addressing Jews and Gentiles, "This dispensation was given me to you ward." Had the grace of God spoken of in our text meant God's favour to Paul in his calling as Apostle of the Gentiles, then the statement that it was given him for the Gentiles (to you ward) would be tautological.

Ver. 3. *How that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery.*—The apostle now proceeds to show how this special commission, which he received to work among the Gentiles, was carried out in fact. He was himself practically qualified for executing his commission, by having its terms and contents clearly and fully made known to him. And this knowledge came to him, not by tradition of the fathers,

¹ That is to say, the genitive following "dispensation" is the subjective and not the objective genitive. See the difference between these two stated in Winer's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, pp. 231–233, 1882. If, with Meyer and Ellicott, we make "of the grace" the *gen. objecti*, we should have to translate "the dispensation or arrangement made with respect to God's grace given to me." Then, again, the participle "given" is in the genitive by attraction after the preceding genitives "of the grace of God," and because of the prominence of "grace" in this dispensation. It is quite parallel in sense to Col. i. 25, where the genitive "of grace" is wanting, and the participle is in the accusative, agreeing with "dispensation."

but *by revelation*; for he received it not of man, and his wisdom was not of man, but of God (Gal. i. 11, 12; 1 Cor. ii. 5-6). It was the revelation of God's Son in him (Gal. i. 16) that brought him this knowledge. We have it explicitly stated in the third report of Paul's conversion, given in the Acts of the Apostles, that in that revelation which he then had, he received his commission to the Gentiles, and a full discovery of what was involved in it (Acts xxvi. 17, 18). This revelation was the new element in the apostle's communication. In the previous context he had been unfolding the mystery, but here he tells them of the manner of its discovery to himself.—What was thus by revelation made known he describes as mystery. By this, as the subsequent context clearly shows, the apostle means, not something in its own nature dark, nor something that we know so far only as to understand that much remains unknown and unknowable, but something that from its nature could only be made known by revelation, and has now under this dispensation of grace been so made known. That of which he speaks, the extension of God's offer of salvation to all mankind, was not discoverable by human reason, but was made known to Paul, as it had also been made known to Peter, by direct and special revelation. It is for the comfort of these Ephesians to know that the statement of this truth, which is of such immediate importance to them, was no theory or deduction of man, in working out of which there might possibly be some vitiating flaw, but a direct revelation from God. What had been a mystery hidden from man, and which, so far as man was concerned, must have remained such, is now known by revelation of God.

As I wrote before in few words.—It was of the mystery that the apostle had written before, and not of the revelation. He is now, for the first time, telling in detail about the way in which he came to know the mystery, in order to increase his readers' confidence in him; but the mystery itself he had been discoursing upon in the immediately preceding context. We cannot, therefore, translate as Klöpper does, "In the form in which I wrote before." It is simply "as," introducing a reference such as will afford an explanation (see Winer, *Grammar*, § liii. 8). What he wrote before, that is imme-

diately before, contains the substance of that mystery given him by revelation. We do not need to think of a lost epistle, still less of the Epistle to the Colossians (i. 25) just completed, for the preceding context contains all that is needed for explanation of the present statement.—The passage referred to is appropriately described as a statement “in brief,” “in few words.” The phrase is used only once elsewhere in the New Testament, and in that other passage (Acts xxvi. 28, 29) it is matter of controversy whether it should be rendered “in a short time” or “with little difficulty.”

Ver. 4. *By reference to which, when ye read, ye shall be able to understand my insight in the mystery of Christ.*—“That brief statement,” says the apostle, “is such that you have only to go back upon it and read it again, in order to assure yourselves of my thorough understanding of that mystery which is there unfolded.” He had said enough, even in that summary exposition, to prove that he was one who could speak on the subject with authority. What gave him this authority was his insight in the mystery of Christ. The word which we render “insight” (*σύνεσις*) is a consciousness of the moral character and worth of any act or course of action which may be exercised critically beforehand, so as to determine our relation to it, or reflectively afterwards, so as to determine our moral judgment upon it. Paul claims that even the little he has said should show that he is endowed with this consciousness, which he says revelation brought to him, and that he is morally and spiritually qualified to expound this mystery.—It is called the mystery “*of Christ*,” because it is summed up in Christ and finds its solution in Christ. “The mystery here,” says Lightfoot on Col. ii. 2, “is not Christ, but Christ as containing in Himself all the treasures of wisdom.” According to the previous context, the special mystery here is the calling of the Gentiles to gospel privilege, but in the parallel passage in Col. i. 27, the apostle shows that the revelation of this mystery was *Christ* dwelling in the hearts of the Gentiles, and being in them, as well as in the Jews, the hope of glory.—This verse and the latter part of the preceding one are not to be regarded as a parenthesis, for the clauses are closely joined in construction and in the development of thought

with what goes before and with what follows. Zanchius (*Commentarius*, i. 275, ed. 1888), with reference to the representation which Paul gives of himself here as a steward of the grace of God to the Gentiles, remarks that three things are necessary to a steward. In the first place, he must have given over to him the property which he is to administer. This, Paul says in ver. 3, he has received by revelation, and this the Ephesians may assure themselves of by reading what he has said of the contents of the mystery of God's grace. In the second place, he must have authority to administer conferred upon him. And this authority, says Paul in ver. 7, I received when I was made the minister of Christ by the immediate gift of God in His grace. In the third place, he must have indicated to him the persons on whose behalf he is to dispense what he has received, and the means by which this dispensation is to be accomplished. So Paul shows, in vers. 6 and 8, that his commission was to the Gentiles, and that the means at his disposal was the gospel, by the preaching of which the Gentiles should be brought into the fellowship of the mystery.

Ver. 5. *Which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now, etc.*—This mystery of Christ was not absolutely unknown among the generations belonging to the old dispensation, but among them it was not known as a revelation. What was revealed to them was a more or less clear foreshadowing of certain aspects of the person and work of Christ, but there was no revelation of the mystery. In these generations it was not *as it is now*. The mystery remained hidden, for it was behind a veil that was not yet rent. So long as this veil was unrent a revelation in the proper sense could not be. This, indeed, all generations had in common, that in them all God spoke. But he who spoke in past generations, notwithstanding all the variety of substance and form that characterised his speaking, has spoken now *as he never did before*. He has spoken in His Son, in Christ. And we have seen that Christ is the very sum of the mystery. When God speaks in His Son He reveals the mystery. The preaching of lawgivers and prophets in other generations did not make known the mystery of Christ *unto*

the sons of men. By *the sons of men* Jerome understood common men, to the exclusion of patriarchs and prophets, who should rather be styled "sons of God." The same view is taken quite recently by Beck, who refers to Ps. viii. 4, xi. 4. excluding the prophets as prophets from the category, because their visions of the Messianic future were not within the range of their knowledge as ordinary men (1 Pet. i. 10-12). On the other hand, Bengel supposes that, by *the sons of men*, the apostle meant specially the Old Testament prophets as contrasted with the apostles and prophets of the New Testament. But Meyer very pertinently points out that the contrast here is between times, and not between persons. The sons of men are simply and without exception the individuals who made up the other generations. None of them, even those who knew most, had revealed to them the mystery of Christ. Their knowledge was not of that kind which revelation produced.¹

As it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.—The gospel is here regarded as the revelation of the mystery, as in Rom. xvi. 25. In contrast to the position of the sons of men in the earlier ages, what was not made known to them is now made known by revelation. Paul goes back thus upon ver. 3 to declare that, in common with him, all the inspired preachers of the gospel have had a revelation making known to them the mystery. The apostles and prophets of our text are evidently the same as those designated by these names in chaps. ii. 20 and iv. 11. Beck understands prophets of the Old Testament prophets, and would render, "It is now revealed through the holy apostles,

¹ "The apostle seems to deny that this mystery of the participation of the Gentiles in the blessing of the promised seed was revealed or made known before the time of its discovery in and by the gospel; and therefore could not be so declared by the prophets under the Old Testament, as we have evinced. But indeed he doth not *absolutely* deny what is asserted; only he prefers the excellency of the revelation then made above all the discoveries that were before made of the same thing. The mystery of it was intimated in many prophecies and predictions, though, before their accomplishment, they were attended with great obscurity; which now is wholly taken away. . . . It is only then the *degrees* of the manifestation of this mystery, as to openness, plainness, and evidence, that are asserted by the apostle above all of the same kind that went before; but the *discovery* of it absolutely is not denied."—Owen, *Exposition of Hebrews*, i. 182, Edin. 1854.

and through the prophets of the Old Testament, by the mouth of the apostles." This can only be maintained alongside of the same commentator's view of the exclusion of the prophets from the category of "sons of men." We rather see here, in harmony with the other passages referred to in which the prophets are spoken of, extraordinary office-bearers of the primitive Church, who rank along with apostles, and are with them contrasted with all the members of the old dispensation as favoured ones who had received a revelation. They behold with open face the glory of the Lord, and by their preaching bring others to behold the same. In relation to the members of their own generation, they occupy the place which the Old Testament prophets did in their generations. These other generations, indeed, had not the mystery made known to them by revelation, but what communications God was pleased to make them of other kinds and degrees, He made to them through the prophets. The Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles and prophets were, in their several generations, the channels through which God conveyed sanctifying influences to mankind. And so the Old Testament prophets are called "holy" (2 Kings iv. 9; Luke i. 70; Acts iii. 21; 2 Pet. i. 21); and the same epithet is here applied to the apostles and prophets of the New Testament. They are holy because they are "his" apostles and prophets. They have been chosen and ordained by Him who is holy, for holy service. And further, in order to fit them for their holy office, they have the immediate presence and power of the Holy Spirit. This revelation they owe to Him. It is He who has made known the mystery to them. This mystery can only be spiritually discerned. It is known only to those who have it revealed to them by the Spirit. We would thus join "by the Spirit" with the words "it is revealed," and so have this truth affirmed of both apostles and prophets; and not, as Klöpper and others prefer, with the word "prophets," so as to be practically equivalent to "inspired prophets." That the prophets as well as the apostles were in possession of extraordinary charismatic gifts, is elsewhere made abundantly plain. But what is set before us here is the fact that prophets and apostles alike were recipients of a revelation which was com-

municated to them by the Spirit. It is not that their Spirit is a prophetic Spirit; but that as holy prophets of God, ordained by Him to this office, the Holy Spirit spoke to them. It was not by visions, or dreams, or in an ecstasy, but by the personal communications of God's Spirit, that this revelation came. "By the Spirit," therefore, does not merely affirm that the apostles and prophets were inspired, for this is already involved in their office and designation, but these words indicate the special mode of their inspiration. In this way, too, the new dispensation is characterised as that of the Spirit. The communications of God's Spirit to men under the Old Testament dispensation were of another order from His communications under the New. It was only after God had spoken by His Son that He sent the Spirit of His Son to be the revealer of His will, and to make known by revelation the mystery of the gospel.

Ver. 6. *That the Gentiles are fellow-heirs.*—Here we have the contents of the mystery set forth in detail. What the Gentiles had been before was stated in chap. ii. 12, and our text presents the contrast parallel to chap. ii. 19. The Authorised Version wrongly renders the simple infinitive "should be;" for the apostle's intention is not to declare the end of the revelation, but the meaning and contents of the mystery. The mystery consists in the revelation of the joint-heirship of the Gentiles in the kingdom and household of God. The word "fellow-heirs" occurs only once elsewhere in the writings of Paul, Rom. viii. 17; and in other two places in the New Testament, Heb. xi. 9 and 1 Pet. iii. 7. It is here used absolutely, but we can find the implied complement in chap. ii. 19, in the saints and household of God. Their joint inheritance is that access which both have by one Spirit unto the Father (chap. ii. 18), that is, salvation in its fullest sense.

And fellow-members of the body.—The apostle uses a word (*σύσσωμος*), found nowhere else in Scripture, and probably coined for the occasion by himself. It was used afterwards by Irenæus and Athanasius. The Gentiles have not only the same inheritance in store, but are members in the one body of Christ. They have equal rights and privileges as Church members with the Jews. In the Christian Church there is to be no such distinction as prevailed before between Jews and

proselytes. In the Christian community Jews and Gentiles have a common standing as fellow-members.

And fellow-partakers of the promise.—The word “fellow-partaker” is only used in the New Testament here, and in chap. v. 7, and, like the preceding one, was probably coined by Paul, and used afterwards only by a few patristic writers under his influence. The Gentiles have a full share and interest in the promise which was made to the fathers (Gal. iii. 14; Eph. ii. 12). This promise is the whole plan of salvation, with its covenant blessings.

“There is a necessary concatenation among those three,” says Fergusson, “to wit, a right to heaven, union with Christ’s mystical body, and saving interest in the covenant of grace, the enjoying of any one whereof implieth the other two; and if one of those be wanting, the rest are wanting also; for the apostle speaketh of them as mutually depending one upon another.” This is true and wisely expressed. The attempt made by Stier, and afterwards by Beck, to find in those three propositions a reference to the Trinity, so that they can be associated respectively with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is fanciful and artificial, and can be vindicated only by a very strained and elaborate exegesis.¹

In Christ Jesus by the gospel.—This applies to all the three preceding statements. The Gentiles have that threefold fellowship because they are in Christ Jesus. This is certainly a more natural construction, and gives a much richer meaning than attaching it to the promise as being fulfilled in Christ. If we could connect the words “of the promise” to the three predicates, and not to the last only, then we might fittingly attach “in Christ Jesus” to them; for the representation of Christ, as the fulfilment of the divine promise, is a very common mode of speech in the New Testament. But as they can be suitably connected only with the word “fellow-partakers,” and are quite unsuitable to “fellow-members of the body,” we must understand the words “in Christ Jesus”

¹ The *συγκληρονόμα* refers to God, to the share in God’s household that belongs to the children of God (i. 18, ii. 19; comp. Rom. viii. 17: *εἰ τίκνα καὶ κληρονόμοι θεοῦ*). *Σύσσωμα* refers to Christ as Head of the Church (i. 23, ii. 16–22). *Συμμέτοχα τῆς ἑπαγγελίας* refers to the Holy Spirit (i. 13, ii. 18).—Beck, *Erklärung des Briefes Pauli an die Epheser*, p. 158, 1891.

as indicating the position into which the Gentiles have been lifted, in consequence of which they have become fellow-heirs, fellow-members, and fellow-partakers with all saints. That personal union with Christ is the ground and condition of the enjoyment of all spiritual blessing, is the central idea of this whole epistle (i. 9, etc.). But the proclamation of this, for the acceptance of those who are thus declared eligible, is *through the gospel*.¹ The message of grace as such could know no limits, and its offer must be to all. That which made such an offer to the Gentiles was the gospel, and any other gospel must be something else than the grace of Christ, and so is not worthy to be called a gospel at all (Gal. i. 6-8).

Ver. 7. *Of which I was made a minister*.—The apostle again emphasises the part assigned personally to him in connection with this gospel for the Gentiles. He is a minister of the gospel of salvation, with a special commission of which he speaks particularly in the following verse. The word here rendered minister, our own word *deacon* (διάκονος), literally, perhaps, a runner, has special reference to activity in the service, yet this word is also used, as well as ὑπηρέτης, even where the service is directly connected with the person of the Lord (1 Cor. iv. 1 ; Col. i. 7).² Here Paul speaks of himself as having been made a minister of the gospel, and by the word he uses he calls attention to the activity which he has shown in this work.

According to the gift of the grace of God.—The apostle thus tells how he came into the ministry of the gospel. He does not regard it as a task exacted of him, but as a gift of grace conferred upon him. The office of Apostle to the Gentiles was this gift, and as such he was the administrator of the grace of God. For the execution of his office he had received

¹ The two prepositions used here are respectively ἐν and διὰ. Winer, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, p. 486, 1882, correctly states their exact significance: "When ἐν and διὰ are found in one sentence, διὰ expresses the external means, while ἐν refers to that which was effected in or on the person of some one, and which cleaves to it as it were." Thus (Eph. i. 7), "in whom we have redemption *through* His blood."

² It is scarcely possible to mark any well-maintained distinction in the use of these words in the New Testament. See Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, 10th ed., p. 32, 1886.

a charismatic endowment, which made him "an able minister of the New Testament" (2 Cor. iii. 6).

Given unto me according to the working of His power.—The "given unto me" refers to the grace of God, which is not a mere outward and official call by ordination, but an actual conferring of power such as will fit and qualify him for the discharge of his duties as minister of the gospel. Observe the same preposition "according to" (*κατὰ*) is used to describe how he came by the external call, and how he came by the internal spiritual qualification. His ministry was a gift of God's grace to him, and his endowment for that ministry was the operation of God's own power. When the apostle considers what a change has been wrought in him in turning him from a bitter persecutor to an earnest and successful upbuilder of the Church of Christ, he sees that nothing short of the operation of omnipotence was needed to effect it. This "working" of God's power (i. 19) is the operation of God's Spirit within, energising and imparting strength and vigour, and generally making the minister adequate to the work of his ministry (Rom. xv. 10-19; Phil. iv. 13; 1 Tim. i. 12).

Ver. 8. *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints.*—The apostle has been magnifying his office by showing that the very call to it he had as the gift of the grace of God, and that the inner qualifications needed for its discharge he had wrought in him by no other power than divine omnipotence. And here we have, in a very singular form, a third ground for magnifying that apostolic office. In view of the exceeding dignity of that office, he feels his unworthiness so great that he has to make a comparative out of a superlative, in order to give some conception of his sense of personal insignificance and unfitness. There is less of the comparative than of the superlative in this word. It is his own incomparable meanness, in view of the office conferred on him, rather than his relative position as compared with other saints, that the apostle is thinking of. Still, let it be noted that in the very deepest reach of his humility he claims to be a saint. He is one of the *holy* apostles, otherwise he would not be able to acknowledge God's gift of grace to him, and the working of God's power in him.

Unto me . . . is this grace given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.—He here goes back upon God's gift of grace, and then proceeds to define it more particularly. The office of preacher, and especially that of preacher to the Gentiles, had been bestowed upon Paul, and here he tells in glowing language what his message was. God, in sending him, had said to him, like a second Jonah, "Preach unto them the preaching that I bid thee." We can very well understand why Paul showed himself at first reluctant to accept the commission to the Gentiles (Acts xxii. 19–21). All his personal sympathies and early associations bound him to the Jews. But when he realised the grandeur of the message given him to proclaim, he could scarcely find words expressive enough to indicate his sense of the supreme nobility which this gift of the grace of God had conferred upon him. What he has to proclaim is the divine fulness of the salvation that is in Christ. He characterises the riches of Christ as "unsearchable," a word which occurs only once elsewhere in Paul's writings. In Rom. xi. 33 he uses the expression to characterise the ways of God, which, like Christ's riches, "cannot be traced out." Paul does not make the fact of the incomprehensibility either of God's ways or of Christ's riches an argument for abandoning the search, but regards it as the crowning recommendation of such a pursuit. The thought of the unsearchableness of the riches of Christ rouses his enthusiasm, who has been commissioned to preach the gospel of that Christ. To preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ is to say to them, with that authority which God's revelation to him conferred upon him, that all those riches were laid aside by Christ when He became poor in order that with them—all the more captivating, then, to us because unsearchable—He may make us rich (2 Cor. viii. 9). "You cannot tell them over to all eternity, for if Christ will put forth all His riches, and become poor, on purpose to make men rich, what riches will that be!" (Goodwin, vol. i. 314). "How rich," says Goodwin, quoting from Augustine, "will His riches make us when we shall meet Him in glory, when His poverty makes us thus rich!" Paul could say to all believers, Christ is yours with all His

riches. The fulness of divine grace in Christ, which, especially in this epistle and in that to the Colossians, the apostle keeps so persistently in view of his readers, constitutes those riches, and just because it is God's own fulness, these riches are, like God's ways, inexhaustible, at once a source of study and supply for eternity. Paul had surely good cause to be proud of the gospel given him to preach !

Ver. 9. *And to make all see what is the dispensation of the mystery.*—The apostle had described one part of his duty as minister of the gospel, as consisting in the preaching of the unsearchable riches of Christ. He here describes another part of his official duty, as that of enlightening all the Gentiles in regard to that special dispensation of grace whereby they were now called to embrace the offer of the gospel. While there is no formal limitation of the "all" to the Gentiles, it is certainly they who are in the writer's mind as the parties immediately concerned. The clause is quite parallel to the preceding one, where the sphere of his preaching is designated "among the Gentiles." We should not, therefore, say "all men," as in the Authorised Version, but simply "all." The word rendered "make to see," or "enlighten," would be rather translated "bring to light," as in 1 Cor. iv. 5, if with Westcott and Hort, as the authority of two MSS., A and \aleph , we should omit "all." But the word is well attested, and the meaning assigned by our English Version to the verb is appropriate to the context, and corresponds to the use of the same verb in chap. i. 18. It is of spiritual enlightenment that the apostle here speaks. It is a main part of that work assigned to him, which he regards as a gift of the grace of God, to bring to those addressed by his preaching a saving knowledge of God's message. It is, indeed, a consequence of his preaching that the unspeakably rich grace of Christ should bring spiritual light to those who hear. It is as minister of the gospel of Christ, who is the Light of the world, that he is able to bring light into the hearts of men. We should carefully note that this "making to see" is something different from and more than merely teaching or instructing intellectually. The mystery can be known only in its dispensation or administration. The Gentiles could see it only by having

personal experience of the grace. This distinction between instruction and illumination is clearly stated by Brooks in his "Unsearchable Riches of Christ" (*Works*, iii. 40, 1866): "Many professors know much of God notionally, but know nothing of God experimentally; they know God in the history, but know nothing of God in the mystery."

Which from the ages hath been hid in God.—"From the ages" means since time began, since periods began to be reckoned, that is, from the earliest beginning. The same word is used in Col. i. 26, but the idea conveyed in similar phrases is not so frequent in Paul's writings (Rom. xvi. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 7; Eph. i. 4). What is especially new in our text is the statement that it was *in God* that this mystery was hid. It really could not have been hidden anywhere else. The hiding of it was God's reserve. That men should be made to see what was hid in God, what He had kept among His secret things, in recesses which no creature could penetrate, affords a true and worthy idea of His revelation. The vastness of that hiding-place, too, must awaken the thought that God's reserves, like Christ's riches, are unsearchable. There are surely many surprises for us yet in store. "The reserve which God used for thousand years after thousand years should suggest to us caution in limiting the purpose of God. God has doubtless unspeakable things still in reserve" (Pulsford).

Who created all things.—This statement concerning God seems to be introduced here in order to cause the reader to dwell upon the thought of God's greatness, and the consequent importance of that which he had reserved in His own keeping so long. Any thought that had place among the thoughts of Him who created the world, must be worthy of so great a Being. In the great Creator's mind, the disclosure now made by revelation must have been part of the original plan. He, too, who showed His omnipotence in creating all things, can be trusted to carry out the purpose which he now makes known. The word rendered "created" is frequently used of God's spiritual creation, His new creation of the soul (Eph. ii. 10, 15, iv. 24), and its compounds in many passages. But here, as in several places (1 Cor. xi. 9; Col. i. 16, iii. 10; 1 Tim. iv. 3, etc.), it is used of the physical creation, God's creating

the world. Some commentators wish to make the words refer to the spiritual creation, and it was probably the preference for this interpretation that led to the adoption, in the Received Text, of the additional words "by Jesus Christ," which may have been first of all a marginal gloss, but is destitute of all good manuscript support. But even though the reading had been genuine, the reference would still have been to the physical creation.

Ver. 10. *With the design of now making known.*—The apostle here expresses the purpose of God in keeping the mystery hidden in Himself so long. The reserve maintained was all with a view to its revelation at the fit time. That time has arrived *now*, as in ver. 5.

Unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places.—There is some proportion between the long concealment and the open proclamation. What was hidden in God is now made known through all the creation of God. The designations of the high intelligences here referred to have been examined in detail and classified, in notes on chap. i. 21. The two classes mentioned here are intended as an exhaustive list of all good angels and celestial beings. In heavenly places, as we have seen, chap. i. 3, 20, especially in view of chap. vi. 12, means a sphere that is superhuman, from which, however, the evil spiritual powers are not excluded. The whole connection, however, excludes the evil angels from our present text.

Through the Church.—What has been said here is to the glory of the Church, just as what is said in chap. i. 21 is to the glory of Christ. It is the glory of the Church to reveal God's will and to make known the mystery of His grace, and it is its crowning honour to make this known among the higher intelligences. Christ is the revelation of God to the Church; and the Church is the revelation of Christ to the world, the universe of beings. In His Body is made visible what must otherwise have remained hidden.

The manifold wisdom of God.—The wisdom of God is here described in regard to its adaptability to all races and conditions and circumstances. It is manifold, much varied, capable of manifesting itself under a great diversity of forms. The

word is used in Euripides (*Iph. Taur.* 1149) of the variegated embroidery of a robe; in *Orac. Sibyll.* vii. 120, of emotion; in *Orphic Hymn*, lxi. 4, of discourse. It is not elsewhere used in Scripture. The manifoldness of God's wisdom is illustrated in His dispensations, according to which the divine wisdom has been unfolding itself. It is manifold, because "He reveals Himself in the free progress of the world, which includes an endless variety of independent world-forces and energies, and presents an innumerable, manifold, and complicated play of free causes."¹ Those things that the angels desire to look into make known to them the wisdom of God in the several stages through which He carried His purpose in the ages. The accomplishment of redemption, as seen in the Church, makes it plain to the heavenly intelligences that many things that were dark to them before were designed and brought forth at fitting times and places by the wisdom of God. It is here undoubtedly implied that it was necessary for those high intelligences to recognise and confess the wisdom of God in redemption as shown in the Church of Christ. "Even the heavenly beings," says Ignatius (*Epistle to Smyrneans*, vi.), "and the glory of the angels, and the rulers, visible and invisible, if they believe not in the blood of Christ, judgment awaiteth them also." Yet they are not, like men, partakers of, but only witnesses to, the wisdom of God in redemption.²

Ver. 11. *According to the purpose of the ages.*—It is now made known that all the ages have been working to carry out the purpose of the all-wise God. The purpose to bring all men together in Christ, and thus in one body to reconcile them unto Himself in Him, was present in all the ages, and its accomplishment was being prepared for even in ages, and by means of institutions, that seemed most unfavourable to this end. Though the expression is different, the meaning and scope is very similar to 2 Tim. i. 9. Just because this purpose is part of God's eternal being, it existed before all

¹ Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, § 114, p. 215. Compare the whole section, which treats in a highly suggestive manner of "The Free Course of the World and the Manifold Wisdom of God."

² Compare Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, § 70, p. 133. See also Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, iv. 433, Edin. 1889.

ages, and lasted through all ages, until, in the fulness of time, it was perfectly realised.

Which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord.—The verb here is literally “made,” “did,” and, so far as that word itself is concerned, we might understand this of the working of the purpose in eternity. And undoubtedly this is true, that the eternal decree was formed or appointed with Christ as the party with whom the Father dealt. But the Christ with whom the eternal decree was made was also He by whom it was to be executed in time. And it is this temporal reference that is specially present to the apostle. It is Christ as Jesus, in His historical incarnation, the Word made flesh, as He dwelt among us, that is set forth as He in whom God’s eternal purpose was in time carried out. It is specially the fact that in our Lord, the historical Christ incarnate, the purpose of the eternal ages has been completely realised, which makes known the manifoldness of God’s wisdom to the higher intelligences. “This was it which became the matter of wonderment to them, to see and behold how both their and our Lord Christ was made the centre of them all; and that the works, yea, the purposes of them in God’s heart, about creation, providence, and all sorts of works, wherein the manifold wisdom of God had so appeared, all dispensations to the Jews (the Church of old), and now the calling of the new Church, the Gentiles, were founded all in this one God-man, Jesus Christ.”¹

Ver. 12. *In whom we have boldness and access.*—The apostle now concludes his sentence by an appeal to their personal experience of what this Christ Jesus has been and is to those who believe. United to Him, they are brought into a new relation to God. They are conscious now of a liberty before God, and from God, that they were strangers to before. This liberty is described, in the two words of our text, as a liberty of speech and a liberty of approach. Boldness is literally “liberty of speech.” The word occurs very frequently in the New Testament; eight times in the writings of Paul. In this epistle we have it again, chap. vi. 19, where it means

¹ Goodwin, “The Knowledge of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ,” *Works*, iv. 522, 1862.

absolutely free speech. This is the believer's privilege before the throne of grace (Heb. iv. 16). Liberty of approach is the natural complement to liberty of speech. The way to God is opened to those who are in Christ, for He says, "I am the way, by me unto the Father." Bengel has defined the one as *libertas oris in orando*; the other as *libertas in re*. It is the work of God Himself to open the lips that sin had closed (Ps. li. 15), and this He does for us in Christ. It is when God's light and truth lead us that we are brought to His holy hill and to His tabernacle (Ps. xliii. 3).

In confidence through faith on Him.—We have here the tone and temper produced in the man who exercises the two-fold privilege of the previous clause. Our faith in Christ causes us to place perfect confidence in that liberty of speech and approach which we have in Him. The assurance that we are really entitled to exercise those privileges, depends upon the measure and exercise of our faith. "As faith in Jesus Christ is that grace which uniteth us to Him, so it not only goeth before our boldness, access, and confidence, but also maketh way for and is the cause of those; and therefore the more that faith is kept in exercise there will be the more of liberty and boldness, the more of access to God and nearness, and the more of a well-grounded persuasion of our acceptance by God, and confidence" (Fergusson).

The beginning and the ending of the twelfth verse set forth respectively God's procuring and man's accepting of Christ's salvation. God has carried out His eternal purpose in Christ, so that He is qualified in His person, and by His work, to provide redemption for us, and so secure to us the privileges of reconciliation. Then for ourselves, that we may individually enjoy these privileges, we must exercise faith in Him. God looked upon us in Christ, and we look upon God in Him.

Ver. 13. *Wherefore, I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you.*—In closing the paragraph, the apostle expresses an earnest hope that his readers, on whose behalf he has laid claim to such privileges, may not be so discouraged over his imprisonment and sufferings as to lose the comfort and blessedness of those privileges. There was a danger lest the

troubles that had fallen upon Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles, should make those to whom he had preached doubtful in regard to that preaching, which led to such sad results. And as those troubles had been instigated and originated by the Jews, we may well suppose that the Judaistic party, which sought to have Gentiles admitted to the Christian Church only through Judaism, would be ready to insist that this was punishment laid upon Paul in consequence of those advanced and liberal views which he had proclaimed. Against this the apostle earnestly warns the Ephesians. He expresses the desire that they may not lose the benefit of those great Christian privileges which he has been describing as their rightful inheritance. This is the force of the "wherefore." Those privileges are so glorious that failure to use and enjoy them would be a terrible loss. The verb here used literally means to become weary in anything, and so to lose courage and interest, and to flag. It is the same word used in 2 Thess. iii. 13 and Gal. vi. 9, "Be not weary in well-doing." Compare 2 Cor. iv. 1-16. It is also used outside Scripture, in that ancient homily commonly called the *Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, § 2, "Let us not grow weary of offering up our prayers to God." He reminds them that these tribulations are endured for them, and so the last words of the paragraph refer us back to the first. He is prisoner for the Gentiles. It is the apostle's object in the whole section to magnify his office, and he would have them know that he regards those tribulations as affording the best ground for exultation before God.

Which is your glory.—His suffering for them, instead of being a cause of fainting, is their glory. Instead of disheartening them, it should encourage them. "Paul charged his friends not to be disheartened by his sufferings for them, but to look upon his joyfulness therein as an argument for the greatness and preciousness of their hope" (Pulsford). To be counted worthy to suffer for Christ is the most assuring token of His favour (comp. 2 Thess. i. 4-7; Phil. i. 28). Seeing that Paul now has his glory as the Apostle of the Gentiles, he would have them regard those honourable sufferings of his as their glory. If he takes joyfully all these

tribulations, because of his high conception of the office which he holds, surely they for whom he does this may feel honoured. The apostle also feels that the best preservative against fainting, in view of persecution, is the entertaining of right conceptions of the importance and dignity of those privileges of the gospel which he has proclaimed to the Gentiles. Let them exercise the privileges of free speech and open approach to God, and they shall not be offended when days of trial come. It is only of those in whom the seed of the word finds no depth of soil in which to root itself, that it is said that when tribulation or persecution ariseth they are offended (Matt. xiii. 20, 21). Observe, the apostle does not seek to commend his gospel to the Gentiles by any of its incidental benefits. He does not say that it will lay the basis of a noble civilisation for the world, that it will undermine and by and by overthrow all the pernicious institutions of paganism, that it will secure for them social and economic advantages, and that, therefore, they should regard it as their glory. He points not only to purely religious and spiritual benefits, but also to their accompanying social disadvantages. He wishes them so to emphasise their religious and spiritual privileges, so to bring themselves to a right appreciation of them by using them, that everything associated with them, even bodily suffering and temporal loss, will be regarded as their glory.¹

SECT. VI.—THE APOSTLE'S SECOND PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIANS (Chap. iii. 14-21).

In the former prayer (i. 17-23), the apostle had sought on behalf of his beloved Ephesians, the gift of the Spirit to enlighten them in the knowledge of God and of their heavenly inheritance, and in the understanding of the greatness of that work wrought by God in Christ in His resurrection and exaltation to the place of power. He now prays that God

¹ Dale, in his *Lectures on Ephesians*, pp. 235-241, 1882, admirably shows what it is that is fitted to rouse enthusiasm with regard to the gospel. It really lies in the hearty conviction that in it we have "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

would show the greatness of His power, bestowed on Christ, in the hearts and lives of His disciples, that it may be seen that not only is Christ for them, but that He is also in them, working mightily by His love and grace. In the former it is the objective historical aspect of redemption that is prominent; here it is the subjective experimental aspect of the same fact that is specially emphasised. This difference in the contents of the prayers is in keeping with that which gave occasion to them respectively. The first prayer was occasioned by the apostle's knowledge of their consistent profession, their strict propriety in walk and conversation (i. 15). His second prayer is occasioned by his enthusiastic appreciation of the greatness of their spiritual privileges, and his desire that they might be so endued with heavenly wisdom, that nothing that could possibly happen would discourage them, or make them ashamed of the gospel of the grace of God.

Ver. 14. *For this cause I bow my knees to the Father.*—The majority of commentators regard this as the resumption of the discourse which had been broken off at ver. 1, all the intervening verses being treated as a long parenthesis. We have preferred to treat that passage as a regular consecutive and not parenthetical paragraph. And so we regard the phrase “for this cause” as the independent beginning of a new section, and not as identical with the clause that opens the chapter. We understand it as referring to the substance of the whole preceding section. In it Paul had treated of the greatness and glory of that mystery of God's grace which had been given him to declare. It is his desire that the Ephesians be enabled to avail themselves of the wealth of grace thus put within their reach, and so he prays on their behalf. It is the thought of the unsearchable riches of Christ that constrains him to pray, lest they should, for any reason, fail to appreciate and so to appropriate these. “For this cause,” says Paul, “I bow my knees.” A familiar phrase to indicate the act of worship (comp. LXX.; Isa. xlv. 23; Rom. xiv. 11; Phil. ii. 10). “The bodily attitude is here put for the religious exercise itself. Not that prayer, in all cases, requires the bending of the knees, but because this expression of reverence is commonly employed, especially where it is not

an incidental petition, but a continued prayer" (Calvin). He to whom the knees are bent in prayer is called "the Father." The Authorised Version, following the *Textus Receptus*, adds "of our Lord Jesus Christ," but these words, though present in most of the cursives and in the early versions, the *Syr.* and *Vulg.*, are wanting in all the best MSS. and oriental versions, as well as in the quotations of the fathers. They appeared, however, as a very early gloss. Certainly the reference to the Father, in the opening words of the next verse, is interrupted by this added clause, and it is just possible that the similarity of the words "father" and "family" in the original, may have led to the dropping out of a clause that seemed to spoil the effect of the play upon the words by keeping the similar words apart. The probability, however, is that they were a marginal gloss early incorporated with the text. It follows, indeed, from all that has been said in the preceding context.

Ver. 15. *Of whom*.—The reference here undoubtedly is to the Father. This is, of course, beyond question with the text which we have adopted. But some who accept the addition "of our Lord Jesus Christ" make the words "of whom" refer to Christ. Calvin says it may apply equally to the Father and to the Son, objects to Erasmus limiting the reference to the Father, and, while allowing a liberty of choice, thinks the reference to Christ more probable. Goodwin, in his treatise "Of the Blessed State of the Saints in Glory" (*Works*, vii. 396), applies the words positively to Christ. But even if the disputed clause were retained, we should still refer these words to the Father, as it is of God, in His fatherly relation, that the apostle proceeds in this verse to speak.

Every family in heaven and on earth is named.—The word "family" here is closely connected with the word "father" of the former verse (*patria* from *pater*). It means strictly a family, whether of wider or narrower extent; including all who can claim descent from a common ancestor. They are all members of that father's family. The word was used to designate the families in the tribes of Israel, each claiming one of the sons of the tribal head as its father and being called by his name. It was the ancestor whose name was

borne by all the individuals in common, who was, in this sense, the father of the family. Here this is claimed for God the Father, as giving His name to all the orders of angels and to all the generations and races of men. They are regarded as having all one Father. That these families are regarded as numerous, follows from the use of the word "every," pointing to the many orders of angelic beings and to the many nations of earth. It is wrong, therefore, with Goodwin (*Works*, viii. 396) and others, to think of the two families of the redeemed in heaven and on earth, or, with Calvin, of the heavenly race and the human race in their totality. The rendering of the Authorised Version, "the whole family," is objected to as linguistically incorrect, and would resolve itself into one or other of the views mentioned before, which regard the family as consisting of two divisions.—What the apostle here affirms is that the pattern and archetype of all fatherhood is in God. Each tribe or nation that takes its name from an ancestor to whom it traces its origin, is a miniature picture of all intelligent creation in its relation to God. This is the universal Fatherhood of God, which is God's ideal relation to the hosts of heaven and the generations of men, to be realised in Christ, by whom and to whom they were all created (Col. i. 16). The existence among men of such families, called by an ancestral name, is a witness on behalf of God the Father of all. No limitation should be introduced here, as by Harless "true child," or by Beet "adopted children." This limitation is undoubtedly true in regard to the actual; but the apostle is here dealing with the ideal. Members of those families may, by their conduct, lose their individual right to the family name. Men, by their sin, have indeed forfeited all claim to be called sons of God. The apostle has already shown how all families of earth, Jews and Gentiles, may actually in Christ regain their ideal relationship to the Father. But here it is simply of the ideal relation that he speaks.

Ver. 16. *That He would grant you to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.*—This is the first petition in the prayer, and in asking for strength it strikes the keynote of the whole. The *inner man* is that part of man's nature upon which the Spirit of God can operate. The personal

life of man has this inner and outer side, the spiritual and the fleshly, both of which, in man's fallen state, are under the dominion of sin. These two sides of man's nature are distinguished in 2 Cor. iv. 16, but in such a way as to make it evident that the apostle is there, as also in our text and in Rom. vii. 22, concerning himself only with the case of the regenerate. This point has been admirably and conclusively argued by Fraser, in his "Dissertation concerning the general scope of Romans vii. 14-25," in his *Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification*. In itself the term indicates that part of man's being, as distinguished from the physical, unto which God can communicate His will directly by His Spirit. As Beck well expresses it (*Biblical Psychology*, p. 44), the inner man is that personal life formed from within by the Spirit in union with the soul. "The apostle does not mean a higher and better self, that is left to man after the fall, but a self that is affected by grace, or, as may also be said, released by grace."¹ But the inner man spoken of by the apostle has already been released; for the prayer is not for the conversion of the unregenerate, but for the further strengthening of the regenerate, so that in their struggle against sin they may be victorious. Both the inner and the outward man of the new man are affected by grace. See the different terms "inner," "hidden," "new" man distinguished and defined, Delitzsch, *Biblical Psychology*, iv. § 5, p. 220. The new man is the new creation in Christ Jesus (ii. 10), to which the apostle has before affirmed that these Ephesians belong. In his innermost being, at the seat of life, this new principle is at work, which makes all things new, so that all the powers of understanding, reason, will, and spiritual aspiration, and not merely some of them (and all in their just proportion and proper place) come under its dominion, and are spiritualised and ennobled. So now it is in regard to the inner man of those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus that the apostle prays.—Dealing then with this part of the believer's being, directing his attention to his inner man, the apostle prays that God, by His Spirit, would work there so as to strengthen with might the spiritual side of the regenerate

¹ Delitzsch, *Biblical Psychology*, p. 447, Edin. 1869.

man's being. The minute correspondence between this strengthening and the contrasted earlier state of man when he was without strength (Rom. v. 6), as affecting the inner man and as being dependent on the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit, is admirably brought out by Candlish in his sermon on the text.¹ What the apostle desires is that all that essentially belongs to the inner man, all that grace can make it, the full development of which it is capable, may be realised. The Ephesian believers have a battle to fight against spiritual foes, and Paul prays that they may be strengthened in that part from which resistance against the attack must be shown. In the only other passage in Paul's writings in which the word occurs (1 Cor. xvi. 13), it means to show a brave spirit. And here the apostle adds "with might," to indicate his sense of the need which believers had of having their courage, and all those powers which would give effect to the courageous feelings of the soul, developed in the highest possible degree. But this can be accomplished for men only by God's Spirit. Only He who began the good work can carry it on. Spiritual power in man is everywhere in Scripture conceived of as immediately dependent on the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit.

According to the riches of His glory.—These words indicate the apostle's conception of Him to whom he addresses his prayer, and consequently the manner and measure in which he expects his prayer to be answered. He prays for spiritual strength on behalf of the Ephesian believers, and he prays that this gift may be bestowed in a way worthy of God, as he has been enabled to conceive Him in all His wealth of glory. He has prayed that God would grant them strength in a divinely glorious way. The "Father of glory" (i. 17) has "riches of glory." This glory is nothing else than the perfect manifestation of the majesty and excellency of God, as existing from all eternity in Christ, and in the fulness of time revealed in His incarnate Son, in whom we behold God's glory (John i. 14), whose coming again will be the glorious appearing of the great God (Titus ii. 13). Paul there-

¹ Candlish, *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians expounded in a Series of Discourses*, pp. 54-57, 1875.

fore prays that spiritual strength will so be bestowed upon believers, that those riches of glory that have appeared in Jesus Christ may also appear in them. In Rom. ix. 23, Paul describes God's purpose of election in this very way: that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy.¹

Ver. 17. *That Christ might dwell in your hearts by faith.*—This is not to be regarded as a petition in the prayer parallel to the one expressed in the previous verse. It is not so much an additional petition, but is rather the result of the first petition being answered. It does not depend on "that He would grant," but is explanatory of "strengthened with might." The indwelling of Christ is the secret of all strength. We can be strengthened in no other way than by obtaining the Spirit of Christ as an indwelling presence. There is a certain parallelism between this clause and the preceding one. There we are told that it is "by His Spirit" that we are strengthened; here, that it is "by faith" that this indwelling of Christ in our heart is secured. It is by the exercise of that grace of faith which they already possess (i. 15), that they are to secure Christ's continued presence with them. Thus we have the subjective and objective means whereby spiritual strength is obtained by us. Faith in Christ on our part, and the gift of the Holy Spirit on God's part, bring to us that strength which the inner man needs. But then, again, this spiritual strength which the Spirit produces, and the presence of Christ in the heart which our faith secures, are one and the same thing. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and he who has the Spirit has Christ, who is the source of all power. And thus, in accordance with the thought that all power issues from Christ, the special sphere of Christ's dwelling in the believer is described as the heart. Into this central citadel of man's being faith introduces the Christ. The heart, according to the usage of biblical writers, is the seat alike of thought and feeling. When Christ dwells there He rules the whole circle of the inner man. The apostle "points to that part in which Christ peculiarly dwells, *in your hearts*, to show that it is not enough if the knowledge of Christ dwell on the tongue, or

¹ Compare Beck, *Erklärung des Briefes Pauli an die Epheser*, pp. 165-166, 1891.

flutter in the brain" (Calvin). Toward the close of a discourse on Eph. iii. 17, Goodwin (*Works*, ii. 404-406) discusses union with Christ by faith, which he distinguishes as a union by way of object, faith viewing Christ as the faculty views an object. As the object of faith, Christ is said to dwell in us, in so far as we act faith upon Him. So the apostle prays, not that Christ may dwell in them, but that He may dwell in them by faith. This indwelling by faith implies: (1) An *operative* dwelling; Christ is not only in us, but we are eyeing Him, and directing our hearts and affections to Him, so that His virtue may act upon us: (2) The exercise of faith with reference to all the operations and influences of Christ dwelling in us; Christ in us does thousands of things for us to which our faith contributes nothing, and the apostle prays that the exercise of faith on our part may become co-extensive with the workings of the indwelling presence of Christ: (3) The exercise not only of justifying faith, but all sorts of faith in Christ; for Christ living in us extends not to justification only, but to the whole life of a Christian.

Ye having been rooted and grounded in love.—These words describe the spiritual condition into which those are brought who are strengthened by God's Spirit in the inner man, and have Christ indwelling in their hearts. And they are to be connected with what follows and not with what precedes, inasmuch as they indicate, not the cause or the accompaniment, but the effect of that indwelling of Christ which has been spoken of. It is a state of permanence and establishment that is here described; for both of those influences which are working in them are fitted to produce an enduring and not a mere temporary result. It is *the inner man* that is strengthened, it is *the heart* that holds possession of Christ. It is not the mere outer fringe of his being that has been wrought upon, but the very centre and citadel of all thought and feeling and will. Hence the presence of God's Spirit, and the exercise of the grace of faith, must have a consolidating and confirming effect upon the whole man.—In the use of the two participles, "rooted and grounded," there is here the same rapid change of metaphor as we meet with in

the parallel passage (Col. ii. 7).¹ Compare 1 Cor. iii. 9. The meaning of the figure is practically the same, so that we speak of planting cities or founding them. In using the perfect participle, the apostle shows that he is thinking of a state that shall have been secured when God has granted the strengthening and indwelling asked for.—This establishment is realised in the development of love; not the love of God or Christ to them, but their love as an affection of the soul exercised toward God, and toward all men for His sake, developed within them by the strengthening of the inner man, and the dwelling of Christ in their hearts. Westcott and Hort have joined the words “in love” to the preceding clause, and read, “that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts in love.” This would make the apostle say, “that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts, in the love to Him produced there.” Klüpper has very properly remarked, in opposition to such a construction, that if this had been the apostle’s meaning, we would have expected, instead of “by faith” and “in love,” to read “by faith and love.” It is manifestly unsuitable to regard “in love” as expressing the mode in which Christ dwells in the heart. The words are evidently used of the believer, not of Christ. Hence they must be joined to the participles “rooted and grounded.” As thus connected, they naturally describe the soil in which believers are established and enabled to maintain a firm position. How the soil is provided and prepared is shown by the preceding context. Christ dwelling in our hearts by His very presence produces love there. He is love, and, being appropriated by our faith, those hearts into which by faith He is taken are made loving, and produce the fruits of love in word and deed. Thus he in whose heart this is wrought has that grace which imparts solidity and firmness to his whole spiritual life. Love, as the condition of heart in which those are in whom Christ dwells, is the element in which the *rootedness* and *groundedness* of the Christian character is shown. For we must remember that the apostle is not speaking here of the beginning of the Christian life, of its origin, but of its strengthening in those in whom it was

¹ See Lightfoot, *Commentary on Colossians*, 5th ed., p. 176, 1880.

already present. "The true meaning is that our roots ought to be so deeply planted, and our foundation so firmly laid in love, that nothing will be able to shake us. It is idle to infer from these words, that love is the foundation and root of our salvation. Paul does not inquire here, as any one may perceive, on what our salvation is founded, but with what firmness and constancy we ought to continue in the exercise of love" (Calvin).

Ver. 18. *That ye may be abundantly able to apprehend with all saints.*—This expresses the result secured by our being rooted and grounded in love, and the end for which Christ dwells in our hearts. Grammatically, the connection is immediately with the fact of Christ dwelling in our hearts, for the particle "that" here, as generally, means "in order that" (telic) and not "with the result that" (ecbatic).—The verb "to be abundantly able," literally "to be exceedingly strong," occurs here only in canonical Scripture; and elsewhere in the Greek Bible only in Ecclesiasticus vii. 6, "Seek not to be judge, not being able to take away iniquity." The word is singularly appropriate in a sequel to the prayer for strengthening. That believers should be made strong by the Holy Spirit and the indwelling of Christ, is the gist of the whole prayer, for all else that is mentioned follows naturally and necessarily from this. And so now the apostle indicates the use to which that strength is to be put. As converted men they were no longer altogether without strength; but now the apostle prays on behalf of those who have a little strength, that it may be increased, for that which he wishes them to brace themselves to accomplish needs great strength.—It is an exercise of spiritual cognition on which the apostle desires the spiritually strengthened to engage, and that in the fellowship of all saints. He would have these Gentile Christians transcend the narrow sectarianism which they, as well as the Jews, were apt to manifest, and in this exercise he would have them associate even with those other members of the family, bearing God's name, that are in heaven. He would have them aspire unto a fellowship in knowledge with all the members of God's family in heaven and on earth. Why should they be a whit behind the very chief of all the saints!

What is the breadth and length, and depth and height.—This is that for the apprehension of which we are to make use of the strength granted. Most grammarians and commentators are agreed that we are not to supply here “of love,” as this would make the statement of the following verse purely tautological. Also, these terms of dimension would be scarcely applicable to love, but are much more naturally used as descriptive of “the riches of His glory” in ver. 16. Such was the measure proposed at the very opening of the prayer, and it is most fitting that the suppliant should desire for those on whose behalf he prays, that their aspirations should rise to the same height as his on their behalf. It does not seem desirable to attempt any detailed explanation of these several terms. Many expositors have done this with most unsatisfactory results. Calvin speaks of Augustine’s application of these terms to the cross, and of Ambrose’s attempt to find in them an allusion to the figure of a sphere, as ingenious but utterly unsuitable exercises of the imagination. Meyer gives some interesting specimens, which may serve as a warning against indulgence in any such purely subjective and arbitrary treatment of emotional and rhetorical utterances. Undeterred by this warning, Klöpffer ventures on such an attempt. Understanding the reference of the clause to be to the divine wisdom which discovered the hidden mystery (vers. 9–11), he makes “breadth and length” mean the wide extension of this to all nations of the world; “depth,” its extension also to those under the earth (Eph. iv. 9, etc.); and “height,” the inclusion of the family in heaven. It is much better, and more in accordance with the glowing poetic enthusiasm of the writer, to understand the clause quite generally, and not to explain it by a detailed analysis and application of the separate words. It is an apprehension of the divine riches in all their fulness, in every direction, under every conceivable aspect. There may be an allusion to the solid and substantial structure of the spiritual life viewed as a well-founded building, well-proportioned in all its dimensions, without considering particularly what these separate dimensions may correspond to in the spiritual sphere.—Three of the four words here used do not occur elsewhere than in this epistle

in the writings of Paul, and of these "height" only once again in this epistle (iv. 8). It is worthy of notice, in opposition to the tendency to seek for traces of Gnostic influence in the use of words in this writing, that the other word "depth" (*βάθος*), which was the most characteristic term in the Gnosticism of Valentinus, is used in 1 Cor. ii. 10; Rom. viii. 39, xi. 33; and, with a very direct reference to Gnostic heretical tendencies of the apostolic age, in Rom. ii. 24.¹ In the present passage, the words are used in quite a natural sense, with no reference to Gnostic terminology.

Ver. 19. *And to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.*—The love of Christ is His love to us, not our love to Him. This is evident from the whole drift of the context. In all other places, too, in the apostle's writings, where the word "surpassing" occurs (2 Cor. iii. 10, ix. 14; Eph. i. 19, ii. 7; Phil. iv. 7), it is used only of the attributes and things of God. It is just what might be expected as the result of strengthening by the Spirit, and of Christ's indwelling in our hearts secured by faith, that we should greatly advance in our experimental knowledge of Christ's love for us.—This clause is connected as parallel with the apprehending the breadth and length in the previous clause of the sentence. If we be able, as the apostle desires, to apprehend the divine wisdom of the decree in its whole extent, then there will be necessarily involved a knowledge of Christ's love to us. The love manifested by Christ to us will be the subject of our study, and will be found by us a very fruitful theme. "The love of Christ contains within itself the whole of wisdom, so that the words may run thus: *that ye may be able to comprehend the love of Christ, which is the breadth and length, and depth and height*, that is, the complete perfection of all wisdom" (Calvin). The love of Christ is the real mystery which the gospel, by the Spirit, reveals. The hidden depths are here, and the unsearchable riches.—The apostle's prayer is that the Ephe-

¹ See Lightfoot, *Clement of Rome*, ii. 121, 1890. Clement, *Epistle to the Corinthians*, xl., speaks of having searched in the *depths* of the divine knowledge, and makes this an argument for the orderly performance of God's commands. Thus with the apostle and his early disciples, the study of the depths, which heretical Gnostics made an excuse for disorder, is not intermitted, but is employed on behalf of truth and order.

sians may "*know*" this love of Christ. Those for whom he prays are already experimentally acquainted with this love. It has blessed and saved them. It has called forth responsive love in their hearts. And now Paul prays that they may be enabled intelligently to conceive of that love which has been working such a change in them. Theodore of Mopsuestia pointed out this distinction between what the Ephesians previously had and what the apostle asked for them. It was "*knowing*" as contrasted with "*enjoying*," just as in Ps. xvi. 11, "He whose heart is glad in the Lord looks unto God to have made known unto him the path of life." Besides the enjoyment of Christ's love, the apostle would have us attain unto the knowledge of it. A personal interest in Christ's love is the indispensable foundation, and any knowledge, any so-called *gnosis* which does not rise out of this, cannot be regarded as knowledge at all. To know Christ is, in its earliest stage, to grasp Him and appropriate Him as our own, and in its further stages, out of the love which this earliest form of knowledge creates, to advance to a study of the contents and relation of Christ's love to us, so that we may abound more and more in knowledge (Phil. i. 9).—This love of Christ is further described as surpassing knowledge. We ought to emphasise the fact that in this clause the verb and the noun are one and the same word, and as thus brought together must have one and the same meaning. It seems, therefore, entirely out of place and wrong when Ellicott speaks of the one as being contrasted with the other, the verb in the beginning of the clause referring to that knowledge which arises from the depths of religious experience, and the noun in the latter part of the clause referring to mere abstract knowledge apart from religious consciousness or Christian love, as in 1 Cor. viii. 1, xiii. 8. The knowledge which the love of Christ surpasses is that knowledge in which Paul would have the Ephesian believers advance. When he prays that men may know the love of Christ, it is quite evident that that knowledge must be such as the human faculties are capable of. May they know as far as it is possible for the human understanding to proceed. Though believers are indeed partakers of the divine nature, yet all their powers,

even those most distinctly spiritual, are restricted within the bounds of finitude. Paul prays that we may know the love of Christ up to the limits of our power of knowledge, enlightened by God's Spirit; but then he reminds us that even when that limit has been reached, we shall not have attained a complete and exhaustive knowledge of Christ's love. The second word in our clause does not mean a less perfect knowledge than the first, but both refer to that highest knowledge of which man is capable, which, nevertheless, is not adequate, not perfectly comprehensive of that which to human faculties is incomprehensible.—We should also notice that what is to be known is the love of Christ, and not merely the fact that the adequate and perfect knowledge of it is beyond our reach. The incomprehensibility of Christ's love is not the prominent idea here, and is only brought in incidentally to make it plain what sort of knowledge is sought for.¹—And again, the comparative adjective rendered “passing” or “surpassing” simply means that the love of Christ transcends man's powers of understanding, so that it cannot be defined and accurately measured. It is wrong to render it “more excellent,” so as to make Paul say that love to Christ on our part is better than knowledge. This, besides introducing an idea altogether foreign to the context, would require that differentiating of the meaning of the word “knowledge,” in the earlier and later part of the clause, which we have seen to be unallowable.

That ye may be filled up to the whole fulness of God.—Here we have the end to be served by our being enabled to apprehend and know the love of Christ. The *fulness of God* (*pleroma*, see i. 10, 23) is that which is filled by God, and so the absolute fulness of God is God Himself. And that it is in this absolute sense that it is meant in our text, is shown by the emphatic use of the objective *whole*. The gifts and graces bestowed by God may fill up him on whom they are bestowed, who may therefore be regarded as, relatively to his measure, filled with some of the elements which go to

¹ In order to get this meaning from the words, the participle must be treated as an infinitive. “This,” says Winer (*Grammar*, p. 435, 1882), “cannot be, since the participle is too clearly marked as an attributive by its position between the article and the noun.”

constitute the divine fulness. But here it is the whole fulness of God—a Being who represents perfectly the divine fulness, not merely as having received of that fulness, but as being that fulness. Now, if we compare our text with chap. iv. 13, we shall see that “the whole fulness of God” and “the fulness of Christ” are precisely convertible phrases. In Father, Son, and Spirit dwell all the fulness of the Godhead. Christ, then, is the whole fulness of God. He is that fulness, that which is filled by God. But the apostle is assuming that his prayer has been answered, and that Christ, who is filled with the whole fulness of God, is dwelling in the believer’s heart. And so the end is realised which had been aimed at. He who has the Spirit without measure, who hath the seven Spirits of God, dwelleth in us. We are filled, and that which fills us is the fulness of God. We could not be filled by one who had simply drawn out of that fulness, but only by Him who is that fulness. When we have Christ in our hearts, then we are filled up to the measure of God’s own fulness, with which we are in immediate connection. This is the highest point possible in any petition; nothing higher can be sought or conceived.

By this prayer the apostle would arouse in believers a worthy spiritual ambition. He would not have them linger over “the elements of the first principles of the oracles of God” (Heb. v. 12). His great desire is to see growth in spiritual knowledge and power. “The greatest hindrance to this growth,” says Oetinger, *Grundbegriffe des Neuen Testaments*, i. 350, 1358, “is that so many come to a halt with the doctrine of justification by faith, and do not look beyond into that which Jesus Christ has in store for us at the end.” It is Paul’s wish that those who are justified should be strengthened by contemplation of the riches that are in Christ, who has justified them. These are not exhausted by His work in justifying the ungodly. He has what it will require eternity for Him to bestow upon “the inner man” of the believer.

Ver. 20. *Now to Him who is able to do beyond all things exceeding abundantly beyond what we ask or think.*—The prayer is fittingly closed with a doxology, which is an ascription of

praise to God for what He is, rather than a thanksgiving for particular gifts and mercies received from Him. Leaving out of account such doxological ejaculations as Gal. i. 5 ; Rom. i. 25, ix. 5 ; Eph. i. 4, we have seven regular and formal doxologies in the Pauline Epistles (Rom. xi. 36, xvi. 27 ; Phil. iv. 20 ; Eph. iii. 21 ; 1 Tim. i. 17, vi. 16 ; 2 Tim. iv. 18). In all these the form of the doxology is determined and coloured by the preceding context. God is addressed under that aspect of His character which has been specially prominent in the writing brought to a solemn close by the doxology. The place of the doxology is at the end of a composition, which has been throughout of such a character, or has at least risen to such a point, that a solemn ascription of praise to God might naturally be expected. Each of the books of which the whole Psalter is composed, is fittingly concluded by a doxology. And in every case in which a doxology is introduced in the epistles of the New Testament, the writer has wrought himself up to such a pitch of fervour, that he could not pass on to any other theme, until he had rested his mind and heart, and calmed his emotions, by the utterance of a measured and stately ascription of glory to Him to whom glory is due. So here the apostle in his prayer has risen to the greatest height possible in his petitions, and there is nothing but a doxology that can fittingly follow. He can ask nothing more, for he has asked what will bring into the believer's soul the very fulness of God. He can, therefore, only now turn to Him who is the absolute fulness, and ascribe to Him endless praise. The doxology also, which, on the grounds stated, has become absolutely inevitable, forms an appropriate conclusion to the more distinctly didactic and doctrinal part of the epistle.—As appended to the apostle's prayer on behalf of the Ephesian believers, the doxology is appropriately addressed to him "*who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond what we ask or think.*" We have seen that in the very utterance of his petitions the apostle felt himself hampered, owing to the poverty of human speech, and still more owing to the limitations and superficiality of human capacities. He has perceived very clearly that the real difficulty lies with man, who does not feel his need in such

a way as to ask largely enough, and does not think, or cannot think, adequately of those stores of grace that are included in God's provision for him. It is therefore with an infinite sense of relief that he turns to Him whose ability to give and do is not measured by our ability to ask or think.—The apostle's confidence in God is expressed by a reduplication of expressions indicating the supereminent character of this power. He is *able to do beyond all things*. When all has been done His power is still unexhausted. There is absolutely no limit to His power. This is the strongest statement that he can make regarding the transcendent power of God. What follows, therefore, is a particular instance of what has been expressed in the previous general statement. As absolutely nothing could reach to the limits of God's power, it is evident that it far exceeds all that we can ask or imagine. Hence this particular case is put strongly, "*exceeding abundantly beyond*." This word occurs in Theodotion's Greek translation of Dan. iii. 22, and in the New Testament in 1 Thess. iii. 10, v. 13. It is a compound word, made up of a word which itself means "exceeding" preceded by two prepositions, each intensifying the degree of excess. In Clement, *Cor.* xx., an almost identical adverb is used in speaking of the great Creator, who does "good unto all things, but *far beyond* the rest, to us who have taken refuge in His compassionate mercies, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus the apostle used the strongest word possible to express his sense of the surpassing power to do for us that lay in God. However far our thought or imagination of things desirable may reach beyond what we can express or dare to put in words, far beyond all computation, even beyond that utmost stretch of imagination, goes the power of God to do on our behalf.

According to the power that worketh in us.—The apostle concludes that God's power toward us is of the superabundant character described, from what He has seen wrought in himself and in other believers. He who could do what He has done in us could do absolutely anything; for what has been done required nothing short of omnipotence. Put any power short of omnipotence to work on Christ what God hath

wrought, to work in sinful man what was needed to raise him into heavenly places with Christ, to enlighten the believer and then to strengthen him in the inner man, and we shall at once see how vain and absurd it would be to expect any success. But all this has been done by the power working in us, which must therefore be omnipotence. It is thus, as we consider the power that is wrought and is working in us, that we rise to a right conception of the immeasurableness of the divine power. What can not He do, says Paul, who has made me, who am less than the least of all saints, the Apostle of the Gentiles, and the preacher of that gospel which had been a hidden mystery so long! The verb "worketh" is here not active but middle. In regard to it, Winer (*Grammar*, p. 323, 1882) remarks, "We find a distinction in usage between the active and middle, the active being used by Paul of *personal* (1 Cor. xii. 6; Gal. ii. 6; Eph. i. 11, etc.), the middle of *non-personal* activity (Rom. vii. 5; [Eph. iii. 20]; Col. i. 29; 2 Thess. ii. 7, etc.). But while "the power" here is formally non-personal, that power really is the Holy Spirit.

Ver. 21. *Unto Him be glory in the Church in Christ Jesus.*—Even when the believer has reached the full measure of his spiritual strength, the glory will belong to God and not to the creature. There will be no occasion for self-glorification, but abundant cause to glorify God.—And this glory is rendered in the Church. This specifies the peculiar kind of glory given to God. It is not merely the declaration that He is glorious, that glory belongs to Him; but it is the glory arising from the redemption of Christ. The Church of the redeemed, by its very existence, the fact that it has been by His grace called into being, is that distinctive glory here ascribed to God. Glory in the Church is that special glory due to His name as the God of salvation. And as this salvation in the Church is wrought in Christ, the apostle adds, *in Christ Jesus*, to define exactly the way in which such glory is secured to God in the Church. All the oldest extant MSS., and Westcott and Hort following them, give "in the Church *and* in Christ Jesus." Wordsworth suggests that this variation probably arose from the position of the word "Church"

before the words "Christ Jesus." Meyer regards the "and" as an old, unsuitable, connective addition; and Ellicott considers the proposed reading contrary to critical probability, and thinks that the insertion of the copula may be more readily accounted for as due to emendation than its omission as due to an error in transcription. The meaning is quite evident. Whatever grace we enjoy, the possession of which by us gives glory to God, we owe to Christ. It is the Church in Christ Jesus, because of what it owes to Christ, and because of what it is in Christ, that gives glory to God. "Christ and the Church can no more be divided than God and Christ. God's glory is not hazardous as it was in His first heaven and afterwards in paradise, but sure and steadfast in eternity" (Pulsford). The Church and the glory it yields to God are thus enduring, because they are in Christ Jesus.

To all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen.—The apostle employs an accumulation of phrases to indicate the enduring character of that glory rendered to God. It is in the very highest and fullest sense an *everlasting* glory. In order to express the idea of eternal duration, we have here not only all the parts which go to make up the whole range of time from the beginning to the end, but also the endless age that lies outside of all temporal distinctions, with those eternal periods or epochs of which the human mind has been able to form some glimmering conception. A generation is properly the period during which those live who are of contemporary birth. Its duration has been variously calculated at thirty or a hundred years, according as it was understood of the average or maximum length of man's life. Herodotus reckoned three generations to a century. In Gen. xv. 16, it means a period of a hundred years. "All generations" means the whole range of time as made up of those shorter periods. But what the apostle has to do with here is not time and its divisions, but eternity, which, however, can be made conceivable to man only by the use of terms and figures applicable to time. Just as "all generations" can mean nothing less than all time, so "all the generations of eternity" can mean only the absolute fulness or completeness of eternity.—The phrase

"the age of the ages" is peculiar to this passage. Elsewhere Paul uses the very similar phrase, "*the ages of the ages*" (Gal. i. 5; Phil. iv. 20; 1 Tim. i. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 18), as also other New Testament writers (Heb. xiii. 21; 1 Pet. iv. 11; Rev. v. 13, vii. 12). This latter form of the phrase occurs three times in Clement, *Cor.* xxxviii., xliii., and l. The formula used in our passage is more strictly in keeping with the use of the word "generations." The more usual form calls attention to the several periods, but the form used in the text calls attention to the eternity which embraces all the ages, since the several parts had been already made prominent in the phrase "all the generations." The cumulative effect of the whole is to present a very strong and forcible representation of the eternal duration of that glory which man's redemption, with all that it involves, brings to God.

B.—ETHICAL DIVISION.—CHAPS. IV.—VI.

IN the opening sentences of our commentary, we have indicated the sense in which we distinguish between the earlier and later portion of the epistle, and we have shown there how little disposed we are to employ the designations Theological and Ethical as designations of the respective parts with anything like an exclusive application. From this point onward the apostle assumes a directly hortatory style. This of itself should determine our beginning the second part of the epistle here, and not, as Wordsworth and others are inclined to do, at the 17th verse. That the apostle seems to pass from exhortation to doctrinal exposition is only what we might expect, and what we shall meet with in the later part of this chapter and in subsequent chapters. "The eucharistic feeling does not at once subside; the more level movement of practical exhortation is still lifted, as it were, by a kind of groundswell of spiritual emotion."¹

¹ Davies, *The Epistles of Paul to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon*, 2nd ed., p. 24, 1884.

SECT. VII.—TRANSITION TO THE MORE DIRECTLY PRACTICAL PART—UNITY OF THE FAITH (Chap. iv. 1–16).

The apostle shows how he is keeping in mind the doctrinal conclusions reached in the part just solemnly closed, by coupling immediately his exhortation to maintain a pure walk with an exhortation to maintain the unity, and therefore the purity, of the faith. This exhortation implies a certain fear, similar to that expressed by the apostle some two years before, when he met the elders of Ephesus at Miletus. For the sake of their Christian life, he would have them take heed to the doctrine.

(1) *The Calling of the Christians* (chap. iv. 1–6).

Vers. 1–6. In these verses the apostle addresses his exhortation directly to the Ephesians, on the ground of all that he had said in the earlier part of his epistle. He has laid a good theological foundation. They now know who God is, and what His thoughts and purposes toward them are. The calling wherewith God calls them is in keeping with His own character. As He is shown specially to them in Christ Jesus, so are they to be in this world. His calling of them has direct reference to Himself, and therefore the end for all is one, even as God is one. All that is of God evidences its divine character by tending toward God; and this is the basis of that unity in the Church of God and its members which begins within, and, as it advances to perfection, shows itself more and more outwardly.

Ver. 1. *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, exhort you.*—The view of Hofmann and others, who regard these words as the resuming of the thought broken off in chap. iii. 1, has nothing at all to commend it. The “therefore” of our text is not the “for this cause” of the earlier passage. The idea of such a prolonged parenthesis has the special difficulty of requiring to account for the introduction, in such an incidental manner, of two great themes—the mystery of the Gentiles’ call, and the profound prayer for their spiritual strengthening—both of which will rank at least alongside of the mightiest passages

in the epistle. The "therefore" of our text does not refer back to the end of the second chapter, but quite naturally connects the ethical and hortatory part here beginning with the previous doctrinal part, and more particularly with that section in which the apostle had called special attention to his calling as the Apostle of the Gentiles, on account of which he was now in bonds. The prominence given to his own personality and present circumstances is intended to render the exhortation about to be made more peculiarly solemn and impressive. He feels that as Paul, who is now in bonds for them, he has a father's right to speak earnestly and eagerly. So he exhorts Philemon, "being such a one as Paul the aged." He describes himself here as "the prisoner *in* the Lord." There was no other reason for his being in bonds than the fact of his union with Jesus Christ. He suffers as a Christian. It is always a joy to the apostle to associate himself directly with the Master. Whatsoever his circumstances may be, they can never affect his union with Christ, otherwise than by illustrating the closeness of the uniting bond. He is *in the Lord*. The accident of freedom or imprisonment cannot affect or change this fact. His present imprisonment, instead of affording a cause for stumbling, is to him a proof of the endurance of his relationship to Christ. It is because he is in the Lord that he is now in bonds. His position gives him a right to speak with all authority in the name of the Lord. In Phil. i. 13, he speaks of his bonds in Christ. Paul always refers to his imprisonment and sufferings with a note of triumph in his voice, because he regards them as "the seal of that embassy with which he had been honoured" (Calvin). Hence he does not consider that in passing at once from the contemplation of the Almighty, to whom he had just been ascribing the praises of eternity, to himself the prisoner, chained to a Roman soldier, he was making any descent. Because he is "in the Lord" as a subject of redeeming grace, whose sufferings are for the advancement of the gospel, he is really contributing to the praises of the great God. In Rom. xii. 1, a similar exhortation is brought in immediately after the doxology; and in both passages the verb is more correctly rendered "exhort" than "beseech," as in the Authorised

Version. He exhorts, indeed, with all long-suffering, but also with all authority. It is with the authority of one who magnifies his office that the apostle here exhorts. He does not beseech as one who had to entreat for a favour.

To walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called.—The calling is the invitation of God to share in the salvation of Christ; and, in the case of the Gentiles, it had been shown to be equally free and comprehensive as that which had before been addressed to the Jews. They were called with a calling which was not a whit behind that of the most highly favoured. It is “the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. iii. 14). It is “the heavenly calling” (Heb. iii. 1). It is that “calling of God,” in regard to which the apostle had prayed that the Ephesians might make the hope contained in it the theme of their study and contemplation (Eph. i. 18). It was therefore something very high and of great importance. The earlier part of the epistle has been largely occupied in showing how sublime the idea was which was embodied in it. And now, says the apostle, “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” To walk worthy of the calling which God has addressed to us, is to live in a heavenly fashion, to live in Christ Jesus, to live unto God. “To walk worthy of God” (1 Thess. ii. 12; Col. i. 10) is a precisely equivalent phrase. The calling which is wholly of God comes first, and a corresponding life is looked for as the fitting and appropriate fruit of that calling. Their walking can never render them worthy of the calling of God which is theirs of free grace; but having been enlightened and strengthened, as Paul had prayed that they might be, they are to bring forth fruits in the life, which will give evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling of Christ in their hearts.

Ver. 2. *With all lowliness and meekness.*—These words describe the manner of that walk which the apostle regards as becoming on the part of those who have been called by God in Christ.¹ The word rendered “lowliness” (*ταπεινο-*

¹ See a particularly full and interesting discussion of these two words in Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, 10th ed., pp 147–153, 1885. Comp. also Lightfoot, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 6th ed., p. 109, 1881, and *Epistle to the Colossians*, 5th ed., p. 221, 1880. Also Sophocles, *Lexicon*, and Grimm, *Lexicon*, s. v.

φροσύνη) is not found in any writing earlier than the canonical Scriptures. "It is not ταπεινοφασία, but ταπεινοφροσύνη; not a *show of humility*, but heart lowliness, *humility of mind*" (Leighton on 1 Pet. v. 5). It occurs in Acts xx. 19; Phil. ii. 3; Col. ii. 18, 23, iii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 5. It means the entertaining of a properly humble estimate of self. Its Old Testament equivalent is that word rendered "poor" in the familiar combination in the Psalms, "the poor and needy." It is used in Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, iv. 9. 2, in a bad sense, of the Emperor Galba, as "pusillanimous." In classical Greek, the simple adjective which forms the first part of the word was almost invariably used of some thing or person that was mean and contemptible. Humility first came to be regarded as a virtue after Christ had hallowed lowliness by the example of His life. Christ describes Himself as "meek and lowly" (Matt. xi. 29), using the simple adjectives from which these two words are formed. The word rendered "meekness" (πραΰτης) is the opposite of harshness or severity. The pagan novelists did recognise such a virtue, but their conception of it was superficial, and fell far short of the Christian grace commended in our text. It is a quality of soul possible only to the lowly, and is shown first of all toward God and then toward our fellow-men. Comp. Ecclus. xlv. 4; 1 Cor. iv. 21; Gal. v. 23, vi. 1; 2 Tim. ii. 25. Hence, as Trench points out, David (2 Sam. xvi. 11) is rendered "meek before the cursing Shimei," because he feels that though this spiteful man had no right thus to act toward him, yet it was of the Lord. Christ showed His meekness, as a man made sin for us, by bearing the contradictions of sinners. "Meekness," says Trench, "if more than mere gentleness of manner, must rest on deeper foundations than its own, on those namely which 'holiness' has laid for it, and can only subsist while it continues to rest upon these. It is a grace in advance of 'holiness,' not as more precious than it, but as presupposing it, and as being unable to exist without it." These two words are used together in precisely the same sense as in our text in Clement's *Epistle to the Corinthians*, xxx.: "Lowliness and meekness are with them that are blessed of God."

With long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.— This clause is also connected with the exhortation, as a further description of the walk that is worthy of the Christian calling. It is therefore parallel with the preceding clause, but its independence is marked not only by the repetition of the preposition “with,” but also by the close connection between the virtue of “long-suffering” and “forbearing one another in love.” The latter phrase is little more than explanatory of the preceding. Long-suffering is the virtue opposed to wrathfulness, or readiness to retaliate any injury or offence committed against us. It presupposes our having the power to take vengeance, and our refusal to exercise it. In the LXX. (Isa. lvii. 15; Jer. xv. 15; Macc. viii. 4), just as in the New Testament, it always means endurance of wrongs inflicted by man, and not the endurance of sufferings laid upon man by God; and in Clement, *Epistle to the Corinthians*, xiii., lxiv., and in Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, iii., the same distinctive meaning is maintained. Though Grimm, in his *Lexicon*, distinguishes two applications of the word—to patience under trial and to endurance of injuries, and distributes scriptural examples between the two—it is more correct to recognise only one meaning, that of endurance without retaliation under provocation, under which all the biblical examples may be brought without any undue straining. The apostle recognises this bearing a wrong, where it might have been resented, as a Christian grace, the exercise of which goes to make the life consistent with the calling of the gospel. The *long-suffering* temper of the Christian causes him not only to be slow to anger, but also to be persevering in his endeavours to bless those who have injured him. The phrase “forbearing one another in love” is explanatory of the grace of “long-suffering.” The verb, of which the participle is rendered here “forbearing,” is similarly used in 2 Cor. xi. 19; Col. iii. 12. In Ignatius, *Epistle to Polycarp*, i., “Bear with all men,” it is used precisely as in our text, and probably with an allusion to it. Paul’s idea of that long-suffering, which is a necessary element in the Christian churches, is the resolute refusal on the part of the injured to allow himself to get into such relations with those around him, that he shall not be able to

fulfil the precept, "to do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith" (Gal. vi. 10). The added words, "in love," indicate the spirit in which this forbearance should be shown. Other motives might occasion a display of forbearance toward those who did us wrong—cowardice, or a selfish desire to keep on good terms with the party in view of future advantage. But the motive must be pure. The forbearance must not result from weakness and servility, nor from a mean and calculating covetousness. It must proceed from love of those men in reference to whom we are forbearing. Thus only as followers of God, the great pattern of long-suffering goodness, by forbearing in love, can we show ourselves long-suffering, so as to make our walk worthy of our calling. The followers of God must walk in love (Eph. v. 2). The above exposition has explained why we prefer to include the words "in love" in the second clause of the second verse, rather than to attach it to the third verse. Some expositors (Olshausen, Klöpper, and others, following the punctuation adopted by Lachmann, after Origen) have joined "in love" to "endeavouring to keep," and thus give it a position of peculiar emphasis. They do this, supposing that, as attached to the previous clause, it is redundant, especially if the words "with long-suffering" be regarded as part of the clause. When, however, we regard "with long-suffering" as an independent clause, parallel to the preceding "with lowliness and meekness," and "forbearing one another in love" as an additional explanatory clause, we see the appropriateness and need of the words "in love" as indicating the motive and spring of the forbearance.

We are thus presented with a picture of the ideal of the Christian life in accordance with the idea of the imitation of Christ. Walk worthy of the high calling of God, by copying the lowliness and meekness and long-suffering, showing itself in loving forbearance, of the Son of God. "Walk suitably, namely, in the spirit of Jesus. The love which passeth knowledge is as deep as it is high. The high and lofty One is meek and lowly in heart. . . . Jesus of Nazareth has shown us the spirit and bearing of all the sons of God. . . . 'Learn of me: I am meek and lowly in heart.' Of necessity,

as heirs of the heavenly kingdom, the vocation wherewith we are called must be to walk before God, in all meekness and lowliness, as Jesus walked " (Pulsford).

Ver. 3. *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit.*—The Spirit here is the Holy Spirit, and not, as Calvin and many others have supposed, the human spirit, nor, as De Wette and others, the spirit of the Christian community. The apostle is speaking here to those who already have the "*one spirit*" (chap. ii. 18). He is the Spirit that gives unity, that makes all those one in whom He dwells. The unity of the Spirit is the unity which the Spirit effects. But while it has its origin in the common possession of the one Holy Spirit, this unity must, on the part of individual men, be kept by resisting all fleshly tendencies, and restraining all selfish suggestions of pride or covetousness, which are in their very nature disruptive and inimical to that unity wrought by the Spirit. The apostle had already met with painful instances of discord wrought in the churches, which threatened the unity of the Spirit—in Galatia and Corinth, and probably to some extent in most of the other Christian communities, though they were all still so young. In all these early Christian churches there were at least the Jewish and Gentile elements, where difference of training, and diverse ways of looking at things, made it extremely difficult to maintain this unity in reality and truth. Yet this was the work specially assigned to the members of the churches. It was the Spirit's work to make them one; no other power could do this, or assist in doing it. It is our task to keep it. So Jude exhorts believers who have experienced the love of God, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." And in order to keep this unity which the Spirit has wrought, we must put forth immediate and persistent effort. The participle "*endeavouring*" means to hasten, to show zeal, to exert one's self greatly. It is a work to which we must brace ourselves, and, in performing it, must call forth our utmost endeavours. The word "*unity*" (*ἐνότης*) occurs in Scripture only here and in the 13th verse of this same chapter. This word and a similar one (*ἐνωσις*, which is not to be found in canonical Scripture) occurs very frequently in Ignatius, meaning respectively unity and union, the result and

the process; *e.g.* in *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, vii. viii., "Cherish *union*, shun divisions, be imitators of Jesus Christ, as He Himself was also of His Father. . . . Where there is division and rage, there God abideth not. Now the Lord forgiveth all men when they repent, if, repenting, they return to the unity of God." In order to keep this unity, we must follow God by exercising lowliness of mind, meekness, and long-suffering. The unity will not be broken but by failure to exercise those primary virtues. But to observe those virtues is to have the Spirit of Christ. Only those who are strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man can show in their lives lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, and any other Christian grace. Hence it is that only by the Spirit's presence can our endeavour be made, and be successful in maintaining the unity of the Spirit.

In the bond of peace.—The genitive here is like that of the previous clause. The bond is formed by peace, and consists in peace. We might even read, "in the bond which is peace." In neither case is it desirable to distinguish what grammarians call the genitive of apposition, and the genitive of the subject or author. The unity has the Spirit as its author, and consists in the Spirit, as it is dependent on His presence. The bond is knit by peace, has peace as its author, and consists in peace, has peace for its contents. The peace here spoken of is the peace of Christ, for He is our peace (ii. 14). The idea of this peace, which is Christ Himself, present with us by His Spirit, being the bond in which unity is maintained, is equivalent to that of Col. iii. 15, where this peace is described as the umpire in our hearts, which has to decide whenever a conflict arises there, and by its decision prevents schism and division. If we are to keep the unity of the Spirit, we must avoid and rid ourselves of those dispositions which would rend this bond of peace. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind," etc. (Phil. ii. 3, 4). The bond of union really consists in the exercise of those graces which lead him who has them to renounce self, and say, "I am nothing, but I do all for the gospel's sake."

Vers. 4–6. The apostle now proceeds to show particularly

how this unity is effected. "The three Persons of the Godhead are here remarkably brought out in connection with that unity of the Spirit which you are to endeavour to keep in the bond of peace. The Holy Ghost is in the first of these three verses. The Son is in the second. The Father is in the third."¹ The unity of the Church is described as sevenfold, it may be in order to suggest the completeness and perfection of that unity. "Those seven," says Pulsford, "meet together in the Church of Jesus Christ, and constitute a complex but perfect whole. The scope of each of these is immense, for the greatness of the whole unity attaches to each particular. The sevenfoldness meets in every one of the seven." The absence of the substantive verb from all these verses is probably owing to the apostle's wish to give his utterances in a specially emphatic and memorable form as Christian maxims or proverbs. There is no need to resort to the expediency of supplying the substantive verb, and rendering with Meyer and Ellicott, "*There is one body*," etc. Taking the words as they stand, we continue, as is fitting, the hortatory style of the passage, and do not abruptly introduce a purely assertive statement.

Ver. 4. *One body and one Spirit*.—We have in this verse a further example of trinitarian distribution; for "the one body" calls attention to our mystical union with Christ, "the one Spirit" to the indwelling in us of the Holy Spirit which effects that union, and "the one hope of our calling" is from God the Father.—The Church is the body of Christ (chap. i. 23, ii. 16, v. 30; Col. i. 24; 1 Cor. x. 16, xii. 27), and is therefore one as Christ is one, and as it is ruled by the Spirit of Christ (chap. ii. 18; 1 Cor. xii. 13). We have here, therefore, the whole doctrine of the Church's unity, and what follows is an enumeration of consequences resulting from the truth here stated. To say that believers form one body, is equivalent to saying that they are in vital union with Christ their Head. It should be remembered that a dead body is not a body but a corpse. Dead members do not belong to

¹ Candlish, *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians expounded in a Series of Discourses*, p. 83, 1875. See also Goodwin, "Discourse of Election," *Works*, ix. 131.

the body. When we say that members of the body of Christ have one Spirit, we say that the Holy Spirit is that vital principle which unites them to Christ and to one another. As the soul animates the bodily organism, so the Spirit animates and inspires the Church by dwelling in the hearts of its members. "The apostle teaches us that there is one body," says Augustine, as quoted by Wordsworth, "but this body lives, does it not? Yes. Whence? From the one Spirit. What our soul is to our bodies, that the Spirit is to the members of Christ, to the body of Christ, the Church."

As also ye were called in one hope of your calling.—A connecting link is found between this and the previous clause in Col. iii. 15, "ye were called in one body," or as members of one body. This calling is the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. iii. 14). It is one for all who are called. The hope which that calling holds out is the common salvation. The oneness of the body resulting from the oneness of the Spirit animating it, is in keeping with the fact that the hope enjoyed by all its members is one. What this hope is has been fully explained under chap. i. 18. This hope is not the subjective feeling, but its objective ground. So Christ is called our hope (1 Tim. i. 1; Col. i. 27), as it is on Him whose victory is ours, that the hope of our souls rests.¹

Thus from the Father we have all a common hope of heavenly bliss, from the Son we have that work of grace which secures for us personal union with Him who has acceptance with God, and from the Spirit we have that life which makes and keeps us living members in Him who is our Head.

Ver. 5. *One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*—Perhaps Stier is not altogether carried away by fancy when he calls attention to the different genders of these three words, which are respectively masculine, feminine, and neuter (εἰς, μία, ἓν), and sees in this arrangement a representation of unity in trinity, the manifoldness of gifts in the one Spirit.²—The apostle had shown

¹ Compare Harless, *Christian Ethics*, p. 177, Edin. 1868.

² See Stier, *Die Gemeinde in Christo Jesu*, ii. 29–41, Berlin 1848.

in the previous verse the unity of the Church as an existing institution. The body is there formed of living members, deriving their life from the one Spirit, and looking forward to the realisation of a common hope. Now he turns to its origin to show that this unity belongs to its very inception. Its fundamental principles are the same to all: to the one Lord Christ all are bound, subjectively by the one appropriative act of faith, and objectively by the sealing of the one holy sacrament of baptism.—The one Lord is here made prominent in opposition to the many principalities and powers, whom Jews and Gentiles were alike prone to reverence. They are not supreme, and just because they are many, are unsuited for the place which Christ claims. As in 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6, the apostle puts the one Lord by whom are all things and we by Him, over against the “lords many.” All these, if they exist at all, are under Him who is Head over the Church, which now includes all, both Jews and Greeks (chap. i. 7, 8; Col. i. 27). He is the unifying principle under whom all things and all beings are brought into one. This oneness belongs to Himself. Members of the Church may entertain different views of Him, yet He Himself is one. In this unique position He exercises authority as King and Ruler, and so as one He is denominated *Lord*. We who are members of His body have one Master, and from Him as Lord we receive commandments (1 Thess. iv. 2). As compared with the many masters who may claim our bodily service, He is the one Lord to whom we owe the undivided service of our hearts (Col. iii. 22, 24). It is clear that all the saints have this in common, that they acknowledge Christ as Lord, and profess submission to Him.—That which binds them to this one Lord is the same in all. The one faith is not the common faith, in the sense of a creed containing articles accepted by all. It is the personal faith of the individual believer appropriating the personal Saviour. It is the obedience of the heart to the command of the one Lord, “Come unto me.” It is not strictly correct to call this *subjective* faith; for it is an exercise of soul directed to the objective and historical Christ. It is the one means of salvation, because the one means of union with the one Saviour, for both Jews and

Gentiles (Rom. iii. 30). It does not seem, however, that we are required here to think of a unity in regard to the contents of faith beyond the exercise of personal faith in the one Lord. Pearson in his *Exposition of the Creed*, art. ix., i. 399, ed. Burton, and Bishop Harold Browne in his *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 463, 1858, understand by our text, "*the faith once delivered to the saints.*" But this, as Pearson himself seems to feel, is rather that unity of the faith spoken of in the 13th verse.—The *one baptism* gives a visible seal to that inner unity wrought by faith. Baptism presupposed faith, and only faith in the one Lord was required (Acts ii. 38, viii. 36, 37). It is the symbol of the indwelling of the Spirit; the outward badge of fellowship in the life of Christ. Pulsford refuses to confine the reference to the ordinance of baptism as a sacrament; but though Scripture speaks of baptizing in the purely spiritual sense (Acts i. 5; Rom. vi. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 13), this is certainly not thought of apart from the administration of the ordinance in the Church. Careless neglect and wilful contemning of the ordinance show want of faith in the one Lord; but the fathers teach, says Field (*On the Church*, 3rd ed., i. 236, 1847), "that faith and the inward conversion of the heart flying unto God in Christ, through the gracious instinct and sweet motion of the sanctifying Spirit, may be reckoned a kind of baptism, because thereby they obtain all that which should have been sought in the baptism of water."—The question keenly discussed by many expositors, as to the absence of any mention of the Lord's Supper in this place, is answered by the hypothesis that here only the initial or inaugural acts are taken into account.

Ver. 6. *One God and Father of all.*—The unity which forms the special theme of the whole section, finds its most perfect expression in the doctrine of the Trinity. And now from the Spirit who imparts life, through the Son by whom we have the life-giving Spirit, we rise to the Father who is fount and source of all. The unity is not lost, but most distinctly exemplified, in the tri-personality. We have not to do with three Gods, but with three Persons in the one Godhead. There is one God. We are here presented with the idea of the absolute Deity. The Father is not merely one of the

three Persons, but He is the one God, of whom is the Son, and from both the Spirit. The whole Godhead is in the one God. And it is in this one God that Jews and Gentiles believing in Christ are made one. The family is one of which the one God is Father. The "all" evidently includes only the members of Christ's body of whose unity the whole passage treats.

Who is over all, and through all and in all.—This is certainly intended as a fuller description of the one God and Father. We have no need to restrict the application of these words, as Meyer and others do, to the relation in which the one God stands to the all of whom He is Father. The "all," three times repeated in our clause, is not to be rendered "all Christians," nor even "all men," but absolutely "all things," all beings, men and things. Nor is it possible, without violent contortion, to find in the three phrases any reference to the Trinity. Some expositors—Stier, Ellicott, and others—think it possible, and most in keeping with the pervading Trinitarianism of the whole passages, to see in the three phrases of this clause distinct references to each of the Divine Persons. The difficulty of this interpretation is well illustrated in the case of Irenæus, who, in adopting it, feels it necessary to make the "all" in the first two instances mean "all things," and in the third "all believers:" the Father is over all things, the Word is through all things, and the Spirit is in us all.¹ Ellicott, following Stier, makes the "over all" refer to the Father as exercising sovereign authority, the "through all" to the Son whose redeeming and reconciling influences pervade all hearts, and the "in all" to the Spirit

¹ The reading "in all" is well witnessed to by the oldest MSS., \aleph , A, B, C, and also in the texts used by Eusebius and the interpolator of the Ignatian Epistles, in the beginning and end of the fourth century. But if we make the "all" in each case of the same gender, it will be impossible to carry out the Trinitarian application. Hence, in the interest of this interpolation, the "us" or "you" would be quietly introduced into exposition and translation, and would thence pass into the text. This appears very strikingly in the case of Chrysostom, who had not "us" nor "you" in his text, but simply "in all," and yet in his commentary felt it needful to supply "your," so as to make a difference in meaning between "through" and "in." All who accept the common text, as Goodwin (*Works*, ix. 117), distinguish between the first two clauses as referring to the universe of being, and the third as referring simply to all saints.

as an indwelling presence. One objection to this interpretation that at once occurs is, that nowhere in this epistle, nor indeed throughout the New Testament, are the redeeming and reconciling influences of the Son spoken of as pervading all believers. Chrysostom felt that the "through" could only refer to the Father in respect of His providence. But all such attempts to distribute those prepositional clauses among the three Persons of the Godhead ought to be at once ruled out of court, by insisting upon the appositional relations of the whole clause to the preceding, "One God and Father of all." The general object of the statement in this verse is to describe God in His absolute being as "God and Father of all in every conceivable respect, ruling over all, working through all, dwelling in all" (Winer, *Grammar*, p. 521, 1882). The threefold direction in which the absoluteness of God is represented in those three phrases, is very happily indicated and characterised by Beck:¹ *ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων* indicates the transcendent relationship of Creator, corresponding to the word, "Thine is the glory;" *διὰ πάντων* indicates the all as means, that He works by means of it, that all things are at His service, the relationship of universal rule or sovereignty—"Thine is the kingdom;" *ἐν πασιν* indicates the relationship of immanent power, that which quickens and sustains—"Thine is the power." We have thus, instead of a reference to the essential Trinity, a reference in a way to the economic Trinity, inasmuch as we have the three aspects of divine activity in creation, providence, and grace, using this last term in the wide sense of general spiritual energy.

(2) *Means of Grace to make such Calling Effectual*
(chap. iv. 7-16).

Vers. 7-16. The apostle had set forth in the preceding verses the motives which should induce his readers zealously to strive to maintain the unity of the Spirit, and he now passes on to show that the manifold gifts which they enjoy, by which one is distinguished from another, need not in any way hinder, but are intended to contribute toward the realisation of this end. What was in Christ Jesus in absolute

¹ *Erklärung des Briefes Pauli an die Epheser*, p. 182.

personal unity and perfect fulness, cannot be in any individual human member of His Church. Hence there is a distribution among many, and only when all have contributed, according to their special gifts and endowments, will true unity in faith and knowledge be reached, and with it the perfect standard of true manhood, after the pattern of Christ. Not only various gifts, but also various offices, in which those gifts are exercised, have been ordained with the same object in view—the preserving of the unity of the Spirit. In the measure in which gifts and offices are rightly employed, baneful influences will be shut out, and everything will be made to work together for good to the individual member of the body of Christ, and for the comely growth and the well-proportioned increase of the whole body.

Vers. 7. *But to each of us the grace was given.*—The apostle now speaks of the individual, who, just because of his individuality, might be regarded as frustrating the unity spoken of. If that unity had been of an artificial sort, determined from without, the first duty of those interested in preserving it would be to crush everything that could distinguish one man from another, and so bring about a rigid uniformity. The monkish orders, by enforcing uniformity of dress, occupation, etc., have deliberately planned the suppression of every feature distinctive of the individual. But here the apostle recognised that the grace was given to *each of us*, which is something very different from grace putting each of us into its one mould. The manifoldness is not destroyed by the gift. We remain individuals still. But, individuals as we are, what is true of the all is true of each one of us. We must each, without exception, contribute to the maintaining of the unity, and this just because each of us shares in the grace, the common possession of which constitutes that unity. From what follows, it is evident that “the grace” is not merely grace as appearing in the gifts of the Christian personality, but the influences of the divine Spirit, which is the presupposition of all gracious manifestations in this life. The grace is given by Christ, and when appropriated by the individual and put by him to use, as the servants did with the talents in the parable (Matt. xxv. 14), it

unfolds itself into the distinguishing graces of the particular recipient.

According to the measure of the gift of Christ.—The relative magnitude of the grace of each is determined by Christ's giving. In distributing the talents, He gave to one five, to another two, to another one. The original endowment is determined by the Lord's will. It is the gift of Christ. As to its contents, it is here described as the grace, but in chap. i. 13, 17, the gift of God through Christ, and to those who believe in the Holy Spirit. This gift is the one kind of gift to all. It is not merely grace, but *the grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ that each receives. The measure of the Spirit of Christ, bestowed upon the individual Christian, is the measure of the grace given him. If the origin and authorship of the gift be remembered, no individual will use his endowment otherwise than for the good of the whole (1 Cor. xii. 7 ; Rom. xii. 3–8).

Ver. 8. *Wherefore it is said (in Scripture).*—A very simple quotation formula is here employed, the single word λέγει. It is also similarly used (chap. v. 14 ; 2 Cor. vi. 2 ; Gal. iii. 16 ; Rom. xv. 10). This word is frequently employed in the fuller formula, *The Scripture saith*, λέγει ἡ γραφή (Rom. iv. 3, x. 11, xi. 2 ; James ii. 23, etc.); or the name of the writer of the particular scripture, Esaias, David, the Holy Spirit, the law (Rom. xv. 12 ; Acts xiii. 35 ; Heb. iii. 7 ; 1 Cor. xiii. 34, etc.). Of λέγει, φησί, εἶρηκε, and similar words thus used, Winer (*Grammar*, p. 656, 1882) says that probably in no instance are they impersonal in the minds of the New Testament writers, but that the subject, ὁ θεός, is somewhere in the context, and is to be supplied. On the contrary, Lightfoot, in his note on Gal. iii. 16, remarks that λέγει, like the Attic φησί, seems to be used impersonally, the nominative being lost sight of. In our passage we have no nominative in the context which we can supply, and it seems better to render the phrase impersonally, *It is said*. The same word is used very frequently in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but always with God or Christ understood from the immediate context.¹

¹ Compare Westcott, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1889 ; *Excursus on Use of Old Testament in the Epistle*, pp. 469–495.

Westcott very correctly remarks (p. 457) that the use of the formula in Eph. iv. 8, v. 14, seems to be of a different kind.—The connection between the Old Testament quotation in this verse and the preceding context is indicated by the particle “wherefore” (*διό*). The reference is certainly to the very last words of the previous verse. The apostle does not use the Old Testament passage to prove or even to illustrate the fact of Christ’s ascension. It is the thought of the grace, as Christ’s gift, that is present in the mind of the apostle. The use of the particle is very much to this effect: What has now been stated is quite in accordance with the saying of Scripture. “As though he had said, Why art thou high-minded? the whole is of God” (Chrysostom). Hence what is quoted is given, not as an argument in proof, but simply in illustration of the statement made. It is well to notice here, in anticipation of the looseness of the quotations of which we shall have to speak particularly by and by, that nothing depends upon the reproduction of words. All that the apostle calls attention to is a general coincidence in thought. The fact that Christ gives gifts of grace had been recognised and stated in Old Testament Scripture. But Beck is not justified in assuming that the simple impersonal formula of quotation necessarily implies an inexact reproduction of the passage. Other formulæ are used to introduce quotations no more literally exact than the one before us, and the simple formula of our text would be quite appropriate in introducing the most rigidly literal quotation. Writing to believers, the apostle does not argue for the truth stated, but simply illustrates it by showing that in the Old Testament Scriptures the same line of thought had received expression.

Having ascended on high, He led captivity captive, He gave gifts to men.—As to the source of the quotation, we may at once dismiss, as absolutely without foundation, the idea of Storr, that the apostle uses the words of a Christian hymn well known to the Ephesians, based upon the 68th Psalm. This would be an easy way of accounting for the peculiarities of the text; but besides the fact that there is nothing to support the conjecture, the formula of quotation is one which could only be used of canonical Scripture. Undoubtedly

the apostle intends to quote Psalm lxviii. 18. How, then, does his rendering compare with the Hebrew original and with the Greek translation of the Septuagint? The precise English equivalent of the Hebrew is, "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captives captive, Thou hast received gifts amongst men." The Septuagint rendering is, "Having ascended on high, Thou didst lead captivity captive, Thou receivedst gifts in man." The apostle, in his quotation, changes "Thou hast received gifts among men" into "He gave gifts to men." The modification is quite justifiable, on the ground that Christ, to whom the words are applied, receives gifts among men, only that He may bestow them upon men. But the question remains as to the source, if any, from which Paul derived the form of expression which he employs. It is interesting to refer to the rendering of the passage in the Targum, where the ascent is assumed to be that of Moses on Sinai: "Thou didst ascend to the firmament, O Moses the prophet, thou didst take captivity captive, thou didst teach the words of the law, thou didst *give gifts* to the children of men." The Syriac version of the phrase in question is the same, but it might possibly have been influenced by the Pauline rendering. The Targum rendering must rest on an old Jewish traditional paraphrase of the Hebrew text, which we may very naturally suppose to have been familiar to the apostle, and to have suggested the form which he gives to the Psalm passage in his quotation.¹—The reference of the whole passage in the original seems to be to transactions in the spiritual world. The height is indeed Mount Zion, but this again only as Jehovah's heavenly dwelling-place; the captives are the hosts of super-human powers of evil. If thus understood, an interesting parallel will be found in Isa. xxiv. 21–23. Just as the prophet, so also the Psalmist, deals with God's victories over His and our spiritual foes; and so the apostle, not by accommodation, but by a legitimate, we might say literal, use of the Psalmist's thought, finds a suitable expression

¹ See "Notes on Psalm lxviii," by Canon Driver in *Expositor*, 3rd Series, ix. 20–23, 1889; Gibson, "Source of Paul's Teaching: Rabbinical Training," in *Expositor*, 2nd Series, iv. 287, 1882. An excellent exposition of the relation of the Pauline quotation to the original is given by Perowue, in his note on Psalm lxviii. 18.

for the New Testament dispensation of grace in the gifts of Christ.

Having ascended on high.—The height in the Psalm passage was not heaven (comp. Ps. viii. 8, which Milton, *Paradise Lost*, vii. 584, wrongly understands of “*Heaven’s high-seated top*”), but Mount Zion, into which God ascends to dwell with His people. Jehovah had gone forth to fight for His own, and now He returns in triumph and goes up into His earthly sanctuary, called the height of Zion (Jer. xxxi. 12), and the height of Israel (Ezek. xvii. 23, xx. 40). But the apostle makes the word refer directly to the eternal dwelling-place of Jehovah in the heavens. The temple was, to every pious Israelite, the type and symbol of heaven, and so this rendering, which alone suits the Messianic reference of the passage, is made without violence to the thought or language of the Psalm. The ascension is viewed as a completed act; Christ goes up to dwell. Hence its importance in view of all that follows. Christ has ascended into the place of power. It is the fact that He has risen to this height that is of value here, where the main subject is the giving of Christ.

He led captivity captive.—The word “captivity” (αἰχμαλωσία) is used in the Septuagint version of Num. xxxi. 12, in 1 Macc. ix. 70, and in Rev. xiii. 10. In the former two passages it means the captives, those forming the captivity; the abstract term being put for the concrete.—It should be observed that this leading captivity captive is described as the immediate effect and not as contributory cause of Christ’s ascension. In nature, though not in time, the ascension preceded the captivity. See *Pearson on the Creed*, i. 292, ii. 218, ed. Burton 1843.—The question then arises, Who are the captives? Ecumenius, following Justin Martyr, understands by the captivity those who had been redeemed from the slavery of Satan. He led us captive, a blessed and profitable captivity; for, conquering the devil in spiritual warfare, He took us as captives, not in order that he might enslave us, but in order that He might deliver us from the bitter tyranny of the evil one. A similar interpretation of the phrase is also given in *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. On the other hand, Chrysostom and Theophylact understand by the

captivity the leading captive of Satan ; for Christ took captive the devil, death, the curse, and sin. Calvin may be regarded as mediating between these two views, for, while heartily accepting and clearly expressing the fact that Christ gained a complete victory over the devil and sin and death, and all the power of hell, he also emphasises the fact that it is *out of rebels* that Christ forms every day a willing people, when He subdues by His word the obstinacy of our flesh. In the original passage, the fact of the previous rebellion of those who receive the gifts of the conquering Prince is explicitly stated in the immediate context, but it scarcely belongs to the phrase quoted here by the apostle. It describes the complete victory secured by Christ over all His enemies, visible and invisible, and the utter overthrow of all beings and influences which oppose themselves to the establishment of the Church of Christ. It seems incongruous and unnatural to speak of a captivity that is advantageous to those led captive, because they are not led into slavery but into a glorious liberty.—There are two kingdoms essentially and persistently in antagonism to one another—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world. When Christ came in the flesh, His appearing called forth the enmity of all the powers of the flesh. The prince of the world came to see if he could find anything in Him. His presence awakened the rage of all the combined forces of the devil, the world, and the flesh. They thought to take *Him* captive, who was found in fashion as a man, just as they had been in the habit of leading mankind captive. But they found nothing in Him. They made Him suffer, but they could not take Him, or gain any advantage over Him. Instead of allowing Himself to be added to their captives, He took from them the captives whom they had held under their power. His appearing was the opening of the prison to those who were bound. Comp. Isa. xlix. 9, 25, where it is the mighty, and not his captives, that is dealt with. The oppressor is contended with, and the oppressed is delivered. He who kept others captive is made captive, and the deliverance of his captives is the result of his being himself made captive.

He gave gifts to men.—The gifts intended in the original

passage are clearly the spoils taken from the enemy, and distributed as gifts among the faithful and the favoured. Understanding the captives as the evil powers conquered by Christ, we regard the gifts given to men as the spoils taken from the enemy restored to uses from which they had been diverted, and so rendered means of spiritual development and growth. Canon Driver maintains that Paul here, in his use of the phrase, substitutes a different sense from that intended by the Psalmist. He thinks that in the original, if we make the leading captives captive prefigure the vanquishing of evil powers by Christ, we must regard the gifts received among men to prefigure the tokens of homage rendered by men to their ascended Lord; whereas Paul for *material* gifts *received among* men substitutes *spiritual* gifts *given to* men. He explains this by assuming that Paul followed the Targum paraphrase above referred to, as affording a quotation suitable to his context. But this only pushes the difficulty one step farther back, and leaves the question of the reason and propriety of this alteration unsolved. The substitution of spiritual for material gifts is at once justified, if we admit that there is here a prefiguring, for it is certain that only material things can be used to prefigure spiritual. What most satisfactorily explains the change in Targum and epistle, is the theory of a pregnant construction, which expresses not the immediate but the final attitude of the Conqueror, who is first a receiver of spoils and then a distributor.¹—The gifts are those referred to in ver. 8, the variety of spiritual gifts bestowed upon those who believe, with probably special reference to those special gifts of ministry enumerated in the following verses. The assigning of those gifts to the ascended and glorified Christ is strictly appropriate; for only after He had been glorified was the Spirit given in that form and measure.

Vers. 9. *Now that "He ascended."*—The apostle proceeds to comment upon the terms of the quotation. What had evidently

¹ The rendering "*consisting of men*," which would make the gifts received consist of the persons of those who surrendered themselves rather than their homage or tribute, though favoured by Ewald, Cornill, and other distinguished scholars, is rightly pronounced by Cheyne (*The Book of Psalms*, p. 189, 1888) "less probable."

suggested the passage was the mention of the gift of Christ, which he regards as foreshadowed in the gifts of the conqueror to his faithful and favoured ones. And in proceeding now to justify his quotation, and show the appropriateness of it for his present purpose, he lays hold upon the description of the giver in the Old Testament passage as one who had ascended. This is that by which he will be able to prove that the declaration of the Psalmist is only perfectly realised in Christ. The idea of ascension into such heights is thoroughly fitting only when understood of Him who, from that depth to which He had descended, rose to heights of infinite glory. The ascension intended here is certainly not exclusively the historical ascension of Christ into heaven, but as certainly that is included and implied. The spiritual exaltation consequent upon His humiliation is also present to the mind of the apostle, and so chap. ii. 6, as well as chap. i. 20, is kept in view. It is this comprehensive conception of the glorified Christ that the apostle regards as the most prominent point in the quotation, and as, therefore, calling for exposition and elaboration.

What is it but that He also descended.—Even in the Psalm, He who ascended was not David, nor any human king or leader, but Jehovah. The apostle therefore at once assumes the divinity and heavenly original of Him who ascended, which of necessity implies that He had first descended.¹ It would be impossible to think of ascension as the first movement on the part of one whose proper dwelling was on high. The converse of this statement is made in John iii. 13, where

¹ Pearson, on *The Creed*, i. 290-292, ed. Burton, 1843, discusses fully the meaning of Col. ii. 15 and Eph. iv. 8, 9, and finds that they do not, as most of the fathers supposed, speak of a triumphing of Christ over the powers of hell by His descent. "So that by these two scriptures," he concludes, "no more can be proved than this, that Christ triumphed over principalities and powers at His death upon the cross, and led captivity captive at His ascension into heaven. Which is so far from proving that Christ descended into hell to triumph there, that it is more proper to persuade the contrary. For why should He go to hell to triumph over them, over whom He had triumphed on the cross? Why should He go to captive that captivity then, which He was to captivate when He ascended into heaven?" It should also be observed that the article itself was not found in any of the earlier creeds, though the doctrine was held and expounded by several of the fathers who commented on those creeds.

Christ declares that no man has ascended into heaven, so as to be in a position to descend with a revelation of heavenly things. This revelation was really made by the Son of man, whose eternal being is in heaven, whose movement as a Revealer begins, as here, with His descending. He *first* descended. This idea, but not the word "first," belongs to the text. It was no doubt introduced to secure explicit and emphatic statement for what was clearly the prominent idea of the passage.

Into the lower parts of the earth.—The phrase "lower parts" (τὰ κατώτερα μέρη) is evidently intended to form the antithesis to τὸ ὕψος of ver. 8. The usage of Scripture and of human speech generally suggests the idea of earth in contrast to heaven. This would embrace the whole phrase, "the lower parts of the earth." But the question arises, whether we are not here required to distinguish different parts of the earth, some of which are relatively lower than others, in which case "the earth" must be understood of all the lower universe as distinguished from heaven? This interpretation of our passage really turns upon the meaning which we give to "the earth," and that again upon the view which we take of the genitival phrase "of the earth."

(1) One interpretation very largely adopted is that which understands "the earth" as embracing all that is not heaven, and "the lower part of the earth" as the place of the dead. In his later editions Meyer has adopted this view, following Tertullian, Jerome, Bengel, and other older expositors, as do also Olshausen, Ellicott, Alford, Wordsworth, Klöpper, Moule, and Beet. There is no doubt something fascinating about the thought of Christ's descent into Hades, and somewhat of a divine romance gathers round the fancy scene of His encounter there, upon their own domain, with the mighty powers of sin and death. But it ought to be remembered that this is a creation of the imagination and not a fact of Scripture. It is evidently improper to refer, as Klöpper does, to Phil. ii. 10 as affording a parallel to the proposed interpretation of our passage. For there Christ's dominion is described as extending to things in heaven, things on the earth, and things *under the earth*

(καταχθονίων), in the quite general sense of absolute, all-inclusive sovereignty, just as, in the verse following our text, far above all heavens means the supreme height, the highest elevation possible or conceivable. Nor is his other reference to Pauline usage in Rom. x. 7 any more satisfactory, for there the abyss, as the place of the dead, is only referred to hypothetically as the place to which we do not require to descend in order to find Christ. Ignatius, in his *Epistle to the Trallians*, ix., uses the three phrases employed by Paul in Phil. ii. 10 (only substituting ὑποχθονίων for καταχθονίων), personifying them as witnesses of Christ's crucifixion, evidently, in a rhetorical style, indicating that Christ crucified was a spectacle to the whole universe. Christ's descent into Hades was not made in order to vanquish the devil and his hosts; for all His sufferings, which were the means used by Him in securing His victories, were past. And so, after enumerating the passages which refer to this descent of Christ, Dorner very rightly remarks (*System of Christian Doctrine*, iv. 128), "Eph. iv. 8-10 has no place here."

(2) The other interpretation of our passage understands "the earth" in the natural and ordinary sense of the place of man's habitation during life, and "the lower parts of the earth" as descriptive of the relatively lower position of the earth in comparison with the heavens. This is the view of Calvin, Harless, De Wette, Eadie, Pfleiderer, and many others. It is also supported, on grammatical and philological grounds, by Winer (*Grammar*, p. 616, § lxi. 8a, 1884), and by Grimm (*Lexicon*, s.v.). Winer understands the genitive "of the earth" as a genitive of apposition, such as we have in the phrase (Rom. iv. 11), *the sign of circumcision*, i.e. the sign which is or consists in circumcision. According to this view, the apostle in our text speaks of the lower parts, which are the earth, as contrasted with heaven. The proper antithesis is that set forth in Acts ii. 19: *in heaven above and in the earth beneath*. And in our passage it is the place to which He descended from which He ascended, and certainly the ascension is always understood historically, and therefore also doctrinally, as an ascent from earth, not from any place under the earth, to heaven. The reference in this passage, as thus

understood, is therefore to the incarnation, which involves vicarious suffering, and the death upon the cross. The humiliation, which really exhausts the whole meaning and contents of Christ's descending, is completed by the death and burial, and in the descent into Hades we have the transition to the exaltation, for His entrance into the regions of the dead produces immediate proof that death has no power over Him, but has been already conquered. The work of Christ, as of Him who has descended, is finished on that earth to which He descended; and He has there, in His death and burial, reached those utmost depths from which He ascends into the highest heaven.

As to the peculiar form of the phrase, the word "lower" (*κατώτερα*) occurs nowhere else in Scripture. In the LXX. version of Ps. lxiii. 9, we have "lowest parts of the earth" (*τὰ κατώτατα τῆς γῆς*); and in Ps. lxxxvi. 13, "lowest parts of Sheol." In the latter case the meaning is, the lowest regions, *i.e.* Sheol; in regard to the former passage, Delitzsch's explanation, *the interior of the earth* into which Korah and his company passed, is better than Cheyne's, *the nether world*.

Ver. 10. *He that descended, He it is also that ascended.*—The emphasis is laid strongly on the identity of person in Him who descended and who ascended. The apostle insists upon the continuity of personality in the Christ as manifest in the flesh, and as received up into glory. We cannot say, with Moule, that the main stress is upon the ascending, nor with Meyer and Ellicott, that it rests upon the descending; but we must hold that precisely the same importance belongs to both as facts in the history of the one identical personality. It is the apostle's special aim to keep before his readers' minds the figure of the historical Christ. Pfleiderer (*Paulinism*, ii. 170) rightly insists that the context makes it plain that the interest of the author here is to insist upon the identity of the gloriously victorious One of the Psalm, who ascends into heaven, with the Logos—Christ, who had appeared in the flesh. It seems, therefore, indisputable that the apostle must have had in view some docetic tendency among the Ephesians, or among those near them; though

there is no reason to suppose, as Pfleiderer would have us do, that it presupposes such a developed and advanced Gnosticism as requires the assumption of a post-Pauline data for our epistle.

Far above all heavens.—We have here a more precise definition of the phrase “on high” of the 8th verse. It evidently means the very highest of all heights. As to whether there may be any reference here to the Jewish notion of the seven heavens, Ellicott thinks there is not, while Meyer thinks that there is. It is extremely doubtful whether this notion of a sevenfold heaven was current among the Jews in the apostle’s time. He seems to regard the third heaven as the supreme sphere in which God Himself sits (2 Cor. xii. 2). We regard the reference of the text to be simply to the fact that Christ ascended to God’s throne. Christ passed through and was made higher than the heavens (Heb. iv. 14, vii. 26), and the place He reaches is regarded as the perfect realisation of that which the holiest of all had symbolised (ix. 24). It is the place which He has prepared for His people who are to be with Him, and is so distinguished from other heavens. “There were innocent and holy heavens, and there were thrones, dominions, and powers, with all their multitudes; but there was no heaven founded on universal conquest; no heaven that had overcome flesh, world, sin, death, Hades, and the whole power of the enemy. . . . The fulness and unity of Christ’s nature are utterly distinct from every previously existing form of being. . . . He has founded a new dominion in His Father’s house” (Pulsford).

That He might fill all things.—This is the end contemplated in the descending and ascending of Christ. He first came down and afterward went up, in order that He might *fill* the universe of being. He raises all with Himself. Thus the meaning of the verb “to fill” is plainly “to give fulness to.” Without Him all things would be empty and void. When He rises to the seat of universal authority, then all the departments of being which go to make up His empire are filled by Him, and thus gain substantial reality. Dr. George Matheson, in a very able and suggestive paper, entitled “The Empire of Christ,” in the *Monthly Interpreter*, ii. 144–153,

1885, describes Paul as looking around him upon the great Roman empire which *seemed* to fill all things, only to discover that it really did not do so. Nor, again, did he find this all-filling empire in the theocratic institution of Judaism. There he beheld the empire of king, prophet, and priest; but neither of them, nor yet all combined, could be described as filling all things. They were all defective, because the height had not been reached out of the depth, because He that ascended was not the same as He that descended. Christ is Prophet, Priest, and King, but after a new method; for with Him judgment, power, and Headship are exercised in virtue of His humiliation. His "lowliness was the source of His greatness, and His greatness the crown of His lowliness." It was while yet upon earth, but ready to ascend into heaven, that He who had descended, and was now ascending, said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." His presence in power and glory now, in virtue of His humiliation, filled both earth and heaven, all things and all places constituting the universe of that God, whose mission equally by descending and by ascending He fulfilled.

Ver. 11-16. The apostle here resumes and carries out the thought of Christ's gifts, as bestowed upon men in and through the Church. From the general reference to gifts, he passes to an enumeration of those special gifts of ministry which He has conferred upon men for the benefit of His Church in administration and edification. He enumerates the various offices established in the Church under a threefold classification: (1) Extraordinary and temporary — apostles and prophets; (2) Missionary and propagandist — permanently needed, but not settled in any one locality,—evangelists; and (3) residentiary and local—pastors and teachers.¹ The

¹ Lightfoot, in his *Commentary on Philippians*, 6th ed., p. 185, 1881, makes the classification twofold, designating apostles, prophets, and evangelists as a class of ministers engaged in pioneer work and the founding of new churches; and pastors and teachers as constituting the permanent ministry. Bishop Wordsworth, of St. Andrews (*Outlines of the Christian Ministry*, p. 80), denounces the calling of the apostles, etc., extraordinary officers, as the fundamental mistake of the Westminster divines. The threefold classification adopted above is practically that of Godet (*Expositor*, 3rd Series, vol. v., p. 385, 1887): "First, apostles and prophets, whose work it is to lay the

apostle then proceeds to show what the grand end of the Christian ministry is. That unity of the faith, which is really the central idea of the whole section, must, above all things, be conserved. Gifts of ministry are bestowed in order that the body of Christ may grow up into the unity of the Head; and to secure this end pastors and teachers must so edify the individual members of Christ's body, the Church, that they will all severally yield their meed of service, and contribute their part, to the perfecting of the whole.

Ver. 11. *He also it was that gave.*—Christ is the giver, for the gift (ver. 7) is according to the measure of His giving. The context requires us to emphasise the fact that what is here directly spoken of is simply the gift of Christ in a diversity of endowments. This is urged strongly by Rothe, *Die Anfänge der Chr. Kirche*, p. 257, 1857. But we must remember that Christ not only gives the endowments, but He also gives the calling consequent upon the possession of the endowment. Meyer very properly points out that the function of those who exercise the right of the Church in choosing ministers, is to examine and test the possession on the part of persons presented of the endowment given by Christ. "Thus Christ gave the *persons*, and the community gave to them the *service*."

Some as apostles, and some as prophets.—Apostles and prophets are alike in being extraordinary ministers, with special commission and duties, pertaining to the period of the origin and first planting of Christianity. The apostles and prophets, again, are named in this order, because, as Hooker has well said, apostles had granted unto them the revelation of all truths immediately from Christ, whereas prophets had knowledge only of some things in this way, having otherwise learnt the gospel, but having bestowed on them by Christ a special gift of expounding scriptures, and foreshowing things to come (*Eccles. Polity*, Bk. v. chap. lxxviii.). Both speak by immediate revelation, and exercise their ministry without restriction to any particular locality.

The name apostle is evidently not to be confined to the

foundation of the church; evangelists, by whose ministry it is to be extended; lastly, pastors and teachers, whose office it is to build up that which has been already begun."

twelve immediately called and appointed by Christ as His companions and followers; for not only, as is popularly understood, were Paul and Barnabas, by some special licence, added to this number, but we find also Silvanus (1 Thess. ii. 6), and Andronicus and Junias (Rom. xvi. 7), reckoned among the apostles. The fact, also, of the appearance of false apostles (2 Cor. xi. 13; Rev. ii. 2) makes it certain that the term was employed in a much more extended sense. The apostleship of the primitive Church, as represented in our text, was the office of first rank, because it involved endowments and spiritual gifts of the highest order. The one absolutely indispensable qualification for the office was the ability to testify, from personal knowledge, as to the fact of Christ's resurrection. Hence such distinguished fellow-labourers with Paul as Apollos and Timothy are never styled apostles in the New Testament, because this condition was wanting in their case; while in regard to those above named, as well as in regard to James, etc., there is every reason to suppose that they had been privileged to behold and to have fellowship with the risen Lord. Having this qualification, all that was further needed was the call to office by the Church. The *signs of an apostle* (2 Cor. xii. 12) were simply the proofs afforded by life and work, that the person called by the Church to the apostleship was the person to whom had been given by Christ apostolic gifts. This is the New Testament usage of the word, and it is only with that usage that we have here to do. In the writings of the apostolic fathers, and those of the following age, the name is used sometimes in this sense, sometimes in a lower and less definite sense. The functions of the apostolic office embraced those of all inferior offices. Wherever he went, the apostle engaged in teaching, administered discipline, and took upon himself the care of all the churches with which he had to do. There is no gift or charism in the Church which the apostle has not, so that to him, in relation to the Church membership, the idea of the head as a member of the body might be applied. See Godet on 1 Cor. xii. 28.¹

¹ See Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 10th ed., 1890, "The Name and Office of an Apostle," pp. 92-101. Also Eadie, *Ephesians*, pp. 282, 283, 1854. The name

The name prophet we have already met with (ii. 20, iii. 5). The character of the office and its special functions are most fully set forth in 1 Cor. xii. 28, xiv. 3, 24, 32. The prophet's gift qualifies for an office which naturally holds rank second to that of apostle, for though every apostle was a prophet, every prophet was not an apostle. The New Testament prophets were occasionally inspired with a knowledge of something in the future, in regard to which the Christian communities required to be forewarned, as in the case of Agabus (Acts xi. 27, xxi. 10). Their special function, however, lay in the sphere of Christian doctrine, where they were the vehicles of new revelations, and, under the immediate impulse of the divine Spirit, not as interpreters of the written Word, they afforded direction to the young communities on the many perplexing questions which from time to time arose among them (Acts xiii. 1). The statement of Beck (*Erklärung des Br. Pauli an die Ephes.*, p. 188), that while apostles had to do with *revelations*, the prophets had to do pre-eminently with *exposition*, especially in pointing out the gospel fulfilments of Old Testament prophecies, is utterly wrong, and quite unsupported by any utterance of Scripture. Just like the Old Testament prophets in their prophesying, doubtless they often worked in much of the materials of their predecessors, yet their work was pre-eminently that of revealers. Whether the New Testament prophets committed to writing and circulated what they received by revelations, we cannot tell. We may not feel altogether convinced of the probability of Plumptre's ingenious suggestion (*Theology and Life*, pp. 96-108), that the phrases "*prophetic scriptures*" (Rom. xvi. 26), and "*prophecy of scripture*" (2 Pet. i. 20), may apply to the New Testament writings. But even if this were so, such prophetic writings might have been the work of apostles, as in the case of the New Testament prophecy, the Apocalypse of St. John.

Some as evangelists.—Here we have a third class of gifts qualifying for a distinctive office. The evangelists were missionaries, subordinate to the apostles, and apparently always

is only used in the New Testament in quite a different sense, as equivalent to delegate (2 Cor. viii. 23 ; Phil. ii. 25).

immediately associated with them. To this class belonged Timothy and Titus, who were specially commissioned by Paul to carry on work left unfinished by apostles in Ephesus and Crete, and Philip, who is expressly so named (Acts xxi. 8). Timothy is enjoined to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. iv. 5). Though it would be altogether wrong to define the evangelists of our text, with Chrysostom and Œcumenius, as writers of the gospel rather than preachers, yet we may very reasonably assume that many of the early fragmentary Gospels, which secured currency in certain districts or among certain groups of churches for a time, were the written reminiscences of the oral teachings of some of these men. Their preaching would generally consist in the simple telling of the story of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, such as we have summed up in 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. Highly gifted they might not be, but knowledge of the Scriptures, in which Timothy was proficient (2 Tim. iii. 15), was indispensable.¹

These three offices, of apostle, prophet, evangelist, for which men are qualified by special gifts of Christ, have been rightly characterised as extraordinary. They were specially needed during a period of planting and formation. And yet, though the offices were not continued, many of the most characteristic of the gifts which qualified for these offices are found to be in the possession of individual holders of the permanent ministerial office. We can trace more than a general resemblance to the apostle in brilliant and heroic missionary pioneers; we find no unworthy representatives of the early

¹ There may be some truth in the characterisation of Pulsford; though perhaps he has modern conditions rather too prominently in view, and even then it is surely overdone and one-sided. "Evangelists," he says, "are matter-of-fact men. They are rather inspired by the past than the present. The facts of the gospel are their all in all; of the laws of the facts they know nothing. They are believers, but blind. They are admirably fitted to rouse the attention of plain, unsophisticated persons. For the African mind they are all that you could desire; to the philosophical Hindu they are useless. In the work of awakening simple men from their sleep of sin, they are perfectly at home; but as pastors and teachers they are wholly unfitted." Timothy, as compared with Paul and Apollos, may not have been possessed of brilliant gifts, but he was evidently of sufficient capacity to justify the apostle leaving him with a weighty commission amid such a cultured and highly-civilised community as that of Ephesus.

Christian prophets in preachers and divines who break new ground in the realm of religious thought; and we have still many who successfully follow in the steps of those who went about preaching the gospel. In a very real sense, all Christian preachers have a prophecy to declare to the people, a message which they have individually received by revelation, and utter forth under the immediate impulse of the Spirit.

Some pastors and teachers.—These two, as permanent officers in local congregations, are closely joined together in one class, or may even be regarded as the same persons having in combination the twofold function of ruling and teaching. Ellicott thinks that the pastors were perhaps always teachers, but that the teachers were not always pastors. In any case, we have here properly one class—the permanent church officers, among whom by arrangement, on the basis of endowment, there might be a distribution of functions. In regard to rank, at least, there is equality here, while among those previously named there appeared a gradation. “These,” says Goodwin, referring to the apostles, prophets, and evangelists, “are extraordinary ministers in those times, of differing degrees and order, each particular of them, and therefore each particular is distinguished by the word *some*. And then he specifies the ordinary standing ministers that were to continue in all ages to the end of the world, ‘pastors and teachers,’ about whom the present question is. Now observe the difference he puts. Indeed, the word *some* is set before pastors and teachers to distinguish them from the extraordinary he had spoken of afore, and to show they were of another rank than the former. But observe, again, that he puts no such difference between the pastors and the teachers; he doth not say *some pastors* and *some teachers*. He doth not place the word *some* afore each, as he had done afore, but says only *pastors and teachers*, to show they are of equal commission and rank.”¹—The word “pastors” (ποιμένες) occurs, in the sense of ministers of local congregations, in no other passage. It is identical in meaning with προϊστάμενοι (1 Thess. v. 12), πρεσβύτεροι (Acts xi. 30, etc.), ἐπίσκοποι (Phil. i. 1), ἡγού-

¹ In a “Letter on Church Government” in Goodwin’s *Works*, xi. 544–545, 1865.

μενοι (Heb. xiii. 7). These names, as Ritschl (*Die Entstehung der altkath. Kirche*, p. 350, 1857) says, describe the original ministerial office as political in the widest sense. The office is that of general oversight, so that the pastor stands related to the local church just as the apostle does to the universal Church. It is the function of rule and direction, rather than that of preaching, that is most prominent. This is in accordance with the poetic usage of the word in the classics, where kings and princes are styled ποιμένες λαῶν. The name is also applied to Christ as Head of the Church (John x. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 25; Heb. xiii. 20); and to the Jewish Messiah in the LXX. version of Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Hatch (*Organisation of the Early Christian Churches*, p. 123, 1880) shows how the term passed from its natural to its metaphorical use among the Hebrews, how constantly it is employed by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah for ecclesiastical and civil rulers of the people, and how general its use became in early Christian literature.¹—The word “teachers” (διδάσκαλοι), in the sense of officers in the Christian Church, to whom was committed specially the task of imparting doctrinal instruction, occurs also in 1 Cor. xii. 28; Acts xiii. 1; and in, perhaps, a looser and not altogether official sense, in James iii. 1. It is the Christian equivalent of the Jewish “rabbi.” The work of the pastor was to follow up in his own more limited sphere that of the apostle; the work of the teacher was to follow up in a systematic way the work of the prophet. “If the prophet,” says Godet on 1 Cor. xii. 28, “may be compared to the traveller who discovers new countries, the teacher is like the geographer, who combines the scattered results of these discoveries and gives a methodical statement of them.” Paul also claims for himself the distinctive title of apostle and *teacher* of the Gentiles (1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11). The governing officer, pastor, or overseer must have the teaching gift (1 Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 9; Heb. xiii. 7). Calvin seems in error when he insists upon a

¹ The idea and figure, though not literally the same, is present in 1 Pet. v. 2, 3; John xxi. 16; Acts xx. 28. The term is used as in our text in Hermas, Ignatius, Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, *Constit. Apost.*, and the Latin “*pastor*” in Cyprian.

distinction of the pastoral and teaching offices, on the basis of this passage. The "teachers" of our text do not "preside in the education of pastors," but simply in the instruction of those over whom the pastor rules. The apostle's expression here does not warrant us in saying anything more than this, that ordinarily the holder of this permanent Church office was pastor *and* teacher, while in individual ministers, sometimes the pastoral, sometimes the teaching, gifts would be specially developed.

These diverse spiritual endowments were the gifts of Christ, distributed by Him among the members of His Church. Yet, in the midst of this diversity, unity is preserved. The apostle proceeds to show that they are given, in order that the ideal unity which has not hitherto been realised may be actually attained. There has been no parenthesis and no "going off at a word;" but the idea of Christian unity, the thought of the entire section, is kept firmly in hand throughout each several clause.

Ver. 12. *For the perfecting of the saints.*—This is the first of three clauses, the latter two indicating what must first be secured in order that what is here spoken of may be realised. The relation of the latter clauses to the first we shall discuss when we come to them. Here we have the ultimate purpose of Christ's giving those gifts of ministry in His Church expressed in the most general and comprehensive terms. The word "perfecting" (καταρτισμός) is not used elsewhere in Scripture, but the precisely equivalent word, *κατάρτισις*, is used in 2 Cor. xiii. 9, and the verb *καταρτίζω* frequently, *e.g.* 1 Pet. v. 10; Heb. xiii. 21. The idea is that of making fit to serve the end aimed at, it may be by supplying deficiencies or by amending what is wrong (1 Thess. iii. 10; Gal. vi. 1); but in one passage, specially the so combining of the various spiritual endowments and powers of the several members of the Church, as to secure for the Church unity of endeavour and unity of result. In this specific sense the word is used in Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, chap. ii., "being perfectly joined together in one submission," and then in *Philadelphia*, chap. viii., and *Smyrna*, chap. i., in the sense of established or settled.¹ "These gifts of Christ," says the

¹ See Lightfoot's Note on Ignatius' Ep. to Ephes. chap. ii., in his *Ignatius*, ii. 36,

apostle, "are given for the purpose of fitting together into one body all the members of Christ." They are here called "saints," because that is what without exception characterises all, however diversely gifted they may be.

For the work of the ministry.—The preposition rendered *for* in the former clause is *πρός*, that rendered *for* here and in the following clause is *εἰς*. In his note on Titus i. 1, Ellicott has very exactly distinguished their significance, at least so far as our passage is concerned. While they are very near one another, we might say "*εἰς* rather marks *immediate purpose*, *πρός* *ultimate purpose*." So here Paul affirms that Christ gave these gifts to the Church for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of His body, in order that thereby the saints might be perfectly together into the one temple of God.—All these gifts must be consecrated to the work of the ministry. Those who have these gifts have them, not that by means of them they may exercise lordship or gratify personal ambition, but in order that they may serve. The object of this bestowal of spiritual endowment is to secure the performance of the ministry (*διακονία*). The ministry is certainly not that merely of deacons, nor is it simply service of any kind, but definitely service in the ministerial office, which Paul regards as a special grace from the Lord. Paul and Apollos are successful ministers, according as the Lord *gave* to each (1 Cor. iii. 5). The work of the ministry embraces all that apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers as such are required and qualified to do.

For the edifying of the body of Christ.—This clause is parallel to the preceding, and, together with it, expresses the immediate purpose of Christ's gifts of ministry to the Church. There is also a certain measure of subordination, inasmuch as this work of edification forms a large part of the work of the ministry. Edifying (*οἰκοδομή*) here means the promoting of the spiritual growth of others; the advancement of God's work of grace by means of Christ's gift of grace. The word is used in its literal sense of *building* in Matt. xvi. 23; 1 Chron. xxvi. 27; and, as we have seen, in chap. ii. 21, of the

1889. The proper meaning of the word is "fitting together," either politically, as reconciling of factions, or surgically, as setting of bones.

Christian Church as a whole, under the figure of a building. Here and frequently (*e.g.* Rom. xiv. 19; 2 Cor. x. 8, etc.), of the furthering of the growth of the members of the Church. The gifts are given, not for the rending apart (*καθαίρεσις*, Luke xii. 18), but the building up of Christ's body. "The building of us is nothing but the bringing of us to faith, and the further building of us is the bringing of us from faith to faith, from one degree to another. . . . Paul (Acts xx.) did betake the Ephesians to that word which could further build them up."¹—The term "*Body of Christ*" is here used to designate the Church, in order to emphasise its articulate and organic unity. It also makes it plain that not any local church, but the universal Church of Christ, is meant. It is a favourite figure with the apostle (chap. i. 23, v. 30; Col. i. 24; 1 Cor. x. 16, xii. 27).

Ver. 13. *Until we all have reached*.—This indicates the period during which those gifts will continue operative for the ends spoken of. The gifts are given to carry us on to the attainment of what is hereafter specified. The end for which they are given is served only when all the saints of every degree have filled up their measure, and so have become fit to fill the place in the body which was destined for them. These gifts will be continued, and the organisation of the Church will last, until its ministry under the Spirit has effected this.

Until the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.—In the three clauses, of which this is the first, the apostle describes that perfection unto which the members of Christ's body must reach by means of those gifts of ministry given by Christ in His Church.—The attainment here emphasised and put in the foreground is that unity more generally referred to in the opening verses of the section as the unity of the Spirit, and here more particularly defined according to its contents. It is not unity of faith and knowledge of Christ, but oneness of all in faith and in knowledge.—The faith of the Son of God, as in chap. iii. 12, is faith in Him. And the apostle is speaking here, just as in Gal. ii. 20, not of the beginning of the life of justification, but of its

¹ Bayne, *Commentary on the whole Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 260, 1866.

continuance, the one as well as the other being ascribed to the agency of faith.¹ The knowledge also is that growing perception of the fulness of divine power and grace that is in Christ, which is at once the result of increasing faith and the basis of its further increase. The word here rendered knowledge (*ἐπίγνωσις*) means clear and exact knowledge, "more intensive than *γνώσις*, because it expresses a more thorough participation in the object of knowledge on the part of the knowing subject, . . . a knowledge which very powerfully influences the form of the religious life" (Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon*, p. 159, 1878). This is the proper nature both of faith and knowledge as directed to the Son of God. It is the distinctive characteristic of both of those exercises of human will and intellect, to unite the subject to the object. He who believes and knows, in proportion to his faith and knowledge, is united to Him whom he knows and in whom he exercises faith. This unity in the Son of God is the basis or guarantee of that unity among the saints intended in our text. Faith and knowledge vary in degree in different individual members of the Church. Not only are some believers young and inexperienced, as compared with others who have been longer under the training and discipline of grace, but the measure which, when filled up, will mean perfection for one, is much less than the measure which must be filled up by another. There never can be unity in the sense of uniformity and equality in the measure of grace. There will be perfect unity in faith and knowledge of the Son of God in the Church, when each member has filled up his own measure of Christ's gift, and has thus secured his own destined place as a member in the body of Christ. This is the sort of unity that is brought about through the ministry of divers gifts, the living unity of an organic body whose members have not all the same office, but accomplish by harmonious action the functions of the body, and act under the direction of the energising and controlling head.

The object of this faith and knowledge is named "*the Son of God*." That unity, which is the aim of the ministry of the

¹ See Heurtley, "Justification," *Bampton Lectures*, p. 296, 1846.

Church, is not attained unless it be *the Son of God* that we believe in and know. Under this name He is represented according to His official position, and not in respect of his personal character. There is no reason why the recognition of the Lord Jesus, in His official aspect as Christ the Son of God, should be pitted against the recognition of His personal character as the living and sinless Son of man. It is wholly pernicious to express preference for the one over against the other, as if they could scarcely be conceived of but as mutually exclusive alternatives. Thus, for example, Rothe says, "It is incomparably more important that we should know Christ in His personal character than in His position and office. To the man who knows Him in this character, Christ naturally becomes what, in the gracious providence of God, He was designed to be for humanity" (*Still Hours*, p. 225, 1886). We have only to apply the definition of the knowledge of our text given above, in order to see that such a knowledge of Christ in His official position, of necessity involves the knowledge of Him in His personal character, and also that such a knowledge of His personal character cannot be possessed apart from a corresponding knowledge and believing appropriation of Him in His offices.

Unto a perfect man.—This is a clause co-ordinate with the preceding, describing under another figure the point of time up to which the ministerial office must continue in the Church. We have here described the condition which each and every individual member of Christ's body must reach before the end of the ministry shall have been served. The figure must not be unduly pressed, nor should its application be limited to the individual member of Christ's body. The application of the figure may be made, as Ellicott proposes, to the idea of the complete unity of the holy personality spoken of explicitly in the next clause. As each believer becomes perfect in his moral and spiritual constitution, and is thus fitted for his place in the body of Christ as a perfectly fitting member, the perfection of that body is being attained. The correct conception of the figure seems to have been grasped by Calvin. Speaking of the immediate and present blessedness of those who are in the kingdom of God, he says, "That

kingdom wholly consists in the building up of the Church, or the progress of believers, who, as described to us by Paul (Eph. iv. 13), grow up, through all the different stages of life, into *a perfect man*.”¹ The “perfect” of our text means full-grown, mature, in opposition to the “babes” of the following verse. The perfect manhood of the Church, reached through the various stages of growth, is that which is aimed at.

Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.—The word here rendered stature (ἡλικία) is by many rendered “age.” Grimm, as also Meyer in a precisely similar manner, has assigned to the word in our text this meaning of age: the age in which we are fitted to receive the fulness of Christ. Now, such a rendering must at once be condemned as unnatural in the extreme. If it must be that the word be rendered age, then it would be much more reasonable to adopt the old scholastic notion that all the redeemed will be raised, and that measure and form of mature manly vigour, which characterises the age of thirty-four or thirty-five, which was the age of Jesus at the time of His resurrection, and then it would be a not altogether illogical corollary to assume that in the resurrection all would be of the male sex.² These absurdities would fairly follow on the adoption of the render-

¹ “Psychopannychia,” in Calvin’s *Tracts*, iii. 465, Edin. 1851.

² It may be interesting to see how a sensible modern Roman Catholic commentator views this scholastic rendering of the apostle’s thought. Bernardine à Piconio, in his *Exposition of St. Paul’s Epistles*, ii. 273, 1890, after mentioning the fact that many Latin writers, and especially schoolmen, had adopted the literal understanding of the terms age and stature, though Augustine in his *De Civ. Dei*, xxii. 15, rejects it in favour of the figurative sense, and that some writers so eminent as Basil, Hilary, Athanasius, and Duns Scotus, hold that women, with the exception of the Mother of God, will rise masculine, proceeds with his criticism thus: “But whatever may be the opinion of these writers, the Church has never accepted it, any more than the reason given by Scotus in favour of it, viz. that the female sex is a fault or imperfection of nature. For woman is as perfect as man, though that perfection is on a smaller scale. And her sex can hardly be a fault of nature, since woman was formed by the hands of the Creator from the side of man. And there can be no reason why, if the Mother of God retains her sex, other women may not retain it also. The *plenitude* of Christ is the perfection of His charity, humility, constancy, and other divine graces, in all of which there is no reason why women and men may not equally attain perfection.” Piconio himself renders the word “age or stature.”

ing proposed; for, when it has been adopted, the clause cannot be made to bear any other meaning without importing, as Grimm and Meyer do, a whole phrase, which certainly cannot be supplied from the immediate context. Dr. Field, in his note on Matt. vi. 27, in *Otium Norvicense*, iii. p. 4, 1881, says: "The word *ἡλικία* is ambiguous, signifying either *age* or *stature*: in classical Greek, more frequently *age*; in biblical, *stature*. We have therefore to wait for the concluding word to clear up the doubt. Shall it be a measure of *time* or of *length*?" He finds the answer of the word "*cubit*" decisive in favour of *stature*. He thinks the other rendering would never have been given there but for the comparison of man's age or lifetime to a hand's-breadth in Ps. xxxix. 5. Yet in this passage, and also in Luke xii. 25, Grimm, with Meyer and others, insists upon giving the rendering *age*. This Field ridicules by stating the problem thus, "Find the sum of so many years + one cubit;" Grimm, with Godet, Meyer, and almost all commentators, admitting the rendering *stature* only in Luke ii. 52, xix. 3. All will agree in rendering the word *age* in John ix. 21 and Heb. xi. 11. In Matt. vi. 27 and Luke xii. 25, Field has shown the unnaturalness of any other reading than *stature*, because of the word *cubit* following. In our text we have a word, which, if not just at once so evidently decisive as the *cubit* of Matthew and Luke, will be found on examination no less inappropriate when joined to *ἡλικία* in any other meaning than that of *stature*. The word *measure* (*μέτρον*) is repeated from ver. 7, where it was used to indicate the dimension or amount of the gift of Christ distributed to each believer. It is not a measure of time that is thought of, but a measure of capacity, amount, size. The gift of Christ was not measured out in lengths of days or months or years, but by increasing proportions and growing magnitude. This, too, is in admirable harmony with the immediately preceding phrase.¹ The measure is reached when maturity has been gained, and the saint has become a

¹ Ellicott, with considerable hesitation, after showing how much may be said for the rendering *age*, concludes from the use of this word "measure," and still more such words as *πλήρωμα*, *αὐξήσωμεν*, etc., that the reading *stature* is, upon the whole, more probable and satisfactory.

full-grown man. He has gone through the various stages of growth, and it is the increase in size, and not the time taken in his development, that the apostle is thinking of. And now he defines more particularly what that measure of full-sized and mature manhood is: it is the stature of Christ's own fulness.

The real gift of Christ to each is Christ Himself; and while the measure to each varies, the substance of the gift is the same to all. It is out of the fulness of Christ that all draw, and each one reaches perfection when he is filled according to his capacity with that fulness. It is impossible that any one should receive beyond his measure, and it is equally impossible that God should withhold His gifts of grace until that measure has been reached. As to the precise meaning of the phrase, "the fulness of Christ," it means that of which the stature spoken of consists. It indicates that store of supply previously described by the apostle as the *unsearchable riches of Christ*.

The question has been raised as to whether the perfection treated of in this verse, as the result to be secured before the end of the ministry in the Church shall have been reached, is thought of as attainable in the present life, or only in that which is to come. The distinction between the present and the future does not seem to be in Paul's mind. Perfection for each individual believer is reached when the measure of the gift of Christ destined for him has been secured, and for the Church when all its members severally have gained this position. When and where this shall be is not discussed.

Ver. 14. *In order that ye be no longer children*.—The word "children" (*νήπιοι*) is appropriately used here, as also in 1 Cor. ii. 16, iii. 1, xiv. 20; Heb. v. 13, in contrast to *full-grown men* (*τέλειοι*). The aspect of childhood which it emphasised is that of imperfection, and particularly that imperfection which time and training will overcome. It points originally to the inability to speak, for speech must be acquired, as the faculties grow, by application and labour. It was not a position in which there was a continuance. It was a stage through which every one should pass to something higher. This will guide us in regard to the connection of our passage

with the context. The spiritual progress described in the previous verse has this end in view, that the stage of childhood should be used as a stage, and not rested in as though it were the end. In the ministry, whose functions are described in the earlier part of the section, we have the means provided for imparting that instruction and producing that development needed in order to enable us to transcend the position and attitude of children. Having this ministry now in the Church, and having the assurance that it will be continued until the perfection which it aims at producing in the members of the Church has been reached, it is expected that the result will be regular advance toward spiritual maturity.—Spiritual childhood or immaturity is characterised by faultiness, and discipline must be applied to remove what are really blemishes. In 1 Cor. iii. 1-4, some of those faults are specified—carnal-mindedness, envying, strife, and divisions. Similar faults are ascribed to those who remain spiritually children, in the clauses in our text.

Tossed about like waves.—The verb *κλυδωνίζεσθαι* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. In Isa. lvii. 20, where the wicked are compared to *the troubled sea*, this verb is used in the LXX. In both biblical passages the meaning is tossed like waves, not tossed on the waves. The participle is to be regarded here as used absolutely, and is not to be, as Grimm would have it, joined with the following participle, qualified by the dative of instrument. The substantive *κλύδων*, from which the verb is derived, means an agitated mass of waters, as distinguished from the simple *κύμα*, a wave or swell. The figure used in our text therefore indicates a violent pitching about, and an agitation that is widely spread over man's being. The substantive is used in a figurative passage very similar in meaning to the one before us in James i. 6.

And driven about by every wind of doctrine.—Wind (*ἄνεμος*) is air in motion, and is used figuratively to indicate variability. It is also characteristic of the wind that, as it varies the direction of its own course, it changes with its changing currents the course of everything that is not heavy enough to resist its influence. Those who are not well-instructed and established in the faith are at the mercy of any plausible

pretender who may come preaching some new gospel. "Every wind of doctrine" might be rendered, "every sort of doctrinal novelty." He who is spiritually childish and immature is attracted by anything new, just as the child throws away what it has for something new, irrespective altogether of the intrinsic worth or worthlessness of that which is presented.—This description is evidently intended to apply not to the pre-Christian state either of Jewish or of Gentile Christians (though Klöpper would apply it by preference to that of the latter), but to the undeveloped, infantile condition of those of both classes who did not use aright the gifts of the ministry and the gift of Christ distributed to each individual among them, so as to outgrow that condition in which they were exposed to such dangers. The winds of doctrine are not pagan cults, but distortions of Christian truth, and perversions favoured by those whose spiritual development was imperfect and one-sided. This unstable, variable doctrine is the same as that described in Col. ii. 8, as "philosophy and vain deceit according to the tradition of men," against which the members of the Christian Church are warned.

Consisting of the deceit of men.—This phrase describes the winds of doctrine according to their content. They consist of the deceit of men (*ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων*). The Authorised Version translates as a clause co-ordinate with "every wind of doctrine," or as describing the method by means of which the driving about is effected. It is better to take the *ἐν* as indicating what constitutes the essence of this varying and uncertain teaching, that exercises so fascinating an influence upon unformed minds. The word "deceit" (*κυβεία*) occurs only here in Scripture. Its original meaning is dice-playing, of which fraud was a most frequent accompaniment. Those who childishly yielded themselves to such baseless teaching were the dupes of deceivers. Von Soden, in the *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament*, iii. 1, 1891, offers a brilliant and attractive rendering, *In the sport of men*, understanding by that conduct on the part of those teachers of a frivolous sort, so that they might be said to play with the solemn concerns of men's souls. That this is not more severe an estimate than the apostle would be prepared to

express regarding the character of these false teachers, the following clause clearly shows. Yet the craftiness charged against them there goes more naturally with the idea of deceit here. In 2 Pet. ii. 13, 14, however, those who "sport themselves with their own deceivings" are also charged with "beguiling unstable souls."

In craftiness according to the cunning device of error.—Those false teachers skilfully carried out a scheme, cleverly devised, with the object of leading those astray who would give heed to their reasonings. The opening phrase of the clause, "in craftiness" (*ἐν πανουργίᾳ*), describes the manner in which the deceivers work upon their dupes. Etymologically, *πανουργία* means the capacity for doing everything. In its bad sense, as here intended, it conveys the idea that these false teachers are men of ability and daring, and that they are unscrupulous, and will stick at nothing. This craftiness is shown in the cunning device made use of by error. The word which we render here "cunning device" is *μεθοδεία*, the third *hapax legomenon* of this verse, at least it only occurs again in this same epistle (vi. 11). The verb *μεθοδεύειν* occurs in the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, chap. vii.: "Whosoever shall *tamper with or pervert* the oracles of the Lord," etc. Lightfoot, in his note on this passage, *Ignatius and Polycarp*, iii. 334, suggests that this is the meaning of the substantive in the passage in our epistle. This might be regarded as affording a very fair meaning. The craftiness of those teachers lies in the fact that their error is a corruption or perversion of the truth. But it is much simpler and more natural to accept the ordinary meaning of "pursuit of a plan," and so render here, as in chap. vi. 11, by stratagem, cunning device, wile.

Who the false teachers intended in this verse are is not definitely shown. There is a marked contrast between the way in which the heretical teachers among the Colossians are spoken of, and the way in which those are referred to against whom the Ephesians are warned. The whole tone of the reference leaves upon us the impression, that the apostle means to put the Ephesians on their guard against heretical tendencies of a somewhat indefinite and unformed description, which

were making their appearance in the regions around. His wide experience of men who had erred from the truth, and then assumed the rôle of teachers, gave him a right to generalise in estimating their personal character and the moral quality of their teaching.

Ver. 15. *But that, speaking the truth in love.*—Having in the previous verse shown, under its negative aspect, Christ's purpose in giving to His Church the gift of the ministry, by describing the dangers from which it was intended to deliver believers, the apostle now proceeds to describe that purpose positively, by showing what blessings the right use of the means so provided would secure for them. The whole passage, therefore, including this verse and the next, is still under the particle "in order that" at the beginning of the 14th verse. The participle *ἀληθεύοντες* properly means "speaking the truth." It occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in Gal. iv. 16, where the same meaning is the only natural rendering. There seems no occasion for departing from classical usage, and translating, as Grimm does in Ephesians, "to profess the truth," and in Galatians, "to teach the truth." Ellicott says that this meaning, which suits well enough in Galatians, is here exegetically unsatisfactory, and so he proposes to translate (with Olshausen) "walking in truth." But the natural meaning of the word need not be regarded as unsuitable in this place. The false teachers had made shipwreck of their own faith, and their speaking lies threatened with danger those to whom they spoke. This could be met only by the speaking of the truth. These others spoke lies because the truth was not in them; but those who have the truth must guard the deposit by speaking out in accordance with that which is within. This will be an efficient means of spiritual growth. It is quite a mistake to say with Sadler (*Commentary*, p. 207, 1891), who adopts Ellicott's rendering, that we have this in ver. 25, for there it is truthfulness as a moral habit, here it is the emphatic assertion of true doctrine in opposition to the false. And just because this speaking of the truth is polemical, uttered in answer to dangerous and deadly error, it is necessary that we be particularly careful to manifest in our utterance a spirit

becoming one who defends a truth which is Christ. Hence the apostle would have us speak the truth *in love*. This word, ἐν ἀγάπῃ, therefore, should be joined to the preceding participle, and not be left, as Beck would have it, to be joined indifferently to this, or to the growing up in Christ. There is no appropriateness in the latter connection. This love is here certainly brotherly love, but as such it has been awakened in us by the loving Spirit of Christ, and so can be exercised and shown only by those who love God.¹

We may grow up in all things into Him.—Prominence is thus given to the idea of spiritual growth, already set forth in the 13th verse, as the main end for which Christ has given His gifts. And this growth is to be in all directions and in all departments that belong to the being of a fully developed spiritual manhood. In order that the growth may be *in all things*, that it may not be a morbid growth where certain limbs and members may stretch out of proportion to others, Christ has given a diversity of ministerial gifts, so as to secure in His Church increase in knowledge, in faith, in love. No part of our Maker can be allowed to remain unaffected by those spiritual influences. But there is only one in whom, as the norm or standard, this perfectly-proportioned development is seen. It can only be by growing up into that form, and filling up the outline which it presents to us, that we can attain unto the end unto which Christ has destined us.

Who is the Head, Christ.—Christ is the centre of all spiritual vitality. It is from Him, as Head, that every inspiring, controlling, and sustaining influence proceeds, and His people, as the members of His body, are living and active, in proportion as the channels of communication between Him and them are kept open. Each member will attain full

¹ Beck, *Erklärung*, p. 194, says that ἐν ἀγάπῃ, as standing between ἀληθεύοντες and αὐξήσωμεν, is to be referred to both, and signifies not merely brotherly love, but is the love of Christ spoken of in chap. iii. 17-19, which embraces God and man. The explanation given above of the connection and meaning of the phrase seems much more natural, as it is certainly much more simple. Those who, like Davies (*Epistle to Ephesians*, etc., p. 48, 1884), render ἀληθεύοντες “observing or being loyal to truth,” are led preferentially to attach ἐν ἀγάπῃ to αὐξήσωμεν, and to translate “but being loyal to truth may in love grow up.”

growth when there is no interruption to the flow of spiritual power and influence from the Head. Each member of the body will have grown up into Christ, the Head, and the whole body shall have attained unto this growth, when immediate response is given by each member and by the whole body to every thought, and feeling, and expression of will issuing from the Head. The figure here used to represent Christ's relation to the members of His Church is a favourite one with our apostle. It has been so used already, as we have seen, in our epistle, chap. i. 22, and it occurs again in chap. v. 23, as also in Col. i. 18, ii. 19. Lightfoot, on Col. i. 18, remarks that in the earlier epistles of Paul, the relations of the Church to Christ are described under the same image (1 Cor. xii. 12-27; Rom. xii. 4), but there, with the various functions of the members as his starting-point; whereas in his later epistles he starts from the originating and controlling power of the Head.

Ver. 16. *From whom.*—The apostle shows himself throughout determined to keep the person of Christ to the front. He gives gifts of ministry, not that they may be to men a substitute for Himself, but in order that men may grow up, not merely toward, but *into* Him. And that we may understand how such a growth is possible, He is represented under the figure of the head, with its vital and formative relation to the body. It now seems necessary to vindicate the use of this figure as applied to Christ. If He is the Head, into which the members of the body must grow up, then out from Him, as Head, must flow those vitalising influences which the members need only receive in order to grow. This closing verse of the section shows what streams of grace flow from Him to us.

The whole body.—These words form the subject of the principal sentence, which is interrupted by a long and elaborate participial clause. What the apostle deals with here is the growth of the body, which depends upon the supplies furnished by the head, and also upon the presence of adequate and rightly-placed channels for the communication of those supplies to every part of the organism.

Being fitly joined and closely knit together.—The participial clause begun by those words sets forth the condition which must be presupposed before the growth of the whole body can

be effected. Free communication must be kept up between the head and the members. The ideal of the Church requires that each member be in contact with the other, each in its place, so that the communication of vital energy from the Head may reach to all. The participles used here are in the present tense, to indicate the continuance of the process whereby the members of Christ's body are being fitted into their places and closely bound together as parts of one grand structure. The first of these participles, *συναρμολογούμενος*, derived from the simple *ἄρμός*, a joint, is the same as that which we met before in chap. ii. 24. It only occurs in those two passages. It signifies the harmonious grouping of the different parts that go to make up one whole. Each part finds its place with relation to its adjoining part, so that the whole becomes a regularly articulated system. The other participle, *συνμυβιβαζόμενος*, occurs in the strictly parallel passage, Col. ii. 19, and means closely joined so as to coalesce. It is used of the perfect union of hearts in Christian brotherly love, Col. ii. 2. Together they describe a perfect relationship, in which all the parts are brought together into their proper places, and are so attached by contact with one another, that they work together as one organism for a common end. The first part of the participial clause sets forth generally the symmetrical and regularly-articulated structure of the body of Christ, under the figure of the human body, and what follows shows how this is brought about.

By means of every supply-communicating joint.—This part of the clause describes what it is that draws and binds the several parts together into one whole. That which holds the different parts of the human body together, and binds them so that united action is possible as that of the whole body, is not any mere system of joints and sockets, ligaments and their attachments, but that current of vital energy which the contact of parts allows to pass through the whole. So, too, in the body of Christ, it is not any mere external shaping and fitting of the different members by any process of adaptation and modification, which may bring about an external corporate union, that constitutes the building up into one body spoken of in the text, but a contact of parts and a spiritual adapta-

tion of one member in relation to another, with the view of communicating freely that spiritual supply which descends from the Head for accomplishing one end in the service of a common Lord. Hence the emphasis does not lie, as indeed our English version itself makes quite evident, on the words "every joint," but on the supply communicated through "every joint." The precise meaning of the word here rendered "joint" (*ἀφῆ*) is touch, contact, and that of a very decided or even violent description. Its meaning may be illustrated from its use in the Greek Bible. It is employed in the LXX. of Lev. xiii. 2, and in the versions of *Aquila* and *Symm.* of Ex. xi. 1, to translate the Hebrew *מָגַע*, a blow, a stroke of God's hand, a plague. It is contact of no merely superficial character, but contact that develops into adherence. Hence it is a term that admirably suits both of the participles in the previous phrase. It implies both the placing together and holding together of the several parts. The verb from which it is derived (*ἀπτεσθαι*) is used in Col. ii. 21 together with other two terms indicating operations of the senses. There it evidently means "to touch firmly," so that it might even be rendered "to grasp or lay hold of." It is to touch so as to secure a continued connection. And thus the passage in Colossians gives us a descending scale of sense experiences: Handle not, nor taste, nor even touch (*θιγγάνειν*). The substantive itself occurs in a passage almost precisely parallel to our text, Col. ii. 19. It is a well-known and frequently-used technical term among ancient Greek writers on physiology, and is used in the works of Hippocrates, Aristotle, Galen, in describing the union of parts in the structure of the human frame by means of contact. Chrysostom led the Greek expositors astray, Theodoret among the rest, by a too restricted interpretation of the word. "What is the meaning of this, *by the supply of the touch?*" he asks; and answers, "that is to say, by the sensitive faculty." His own commentary following is sound enough, but other expositors went so far as to identify *αἱ ἀφαί* with *the senses*. The idea of the apostle is quite general, and refers to contact of every kind whereby a free and open channel is secured for the flood of gracious influences from the head through all the members, so that they may be

living members in the body. The word here rendered "supply" (ἐπιχορηγία) occurs elsewhere only in Phil. i. 19; but various parts of the verb are used in a similar sense in Gal. iii. 5; 2 Cor. ix. 10; Col. ii. 19, etc. The force of the compound word is "*abundant supply*." In the passage in Philippians it is used of the Spirit's gift; and there, as Lightfoot remarks, the bountiful supply is the Spirit Himself, as at once giver and gift. In Galatians it is used of Christ as the sender of the Spirit, who bestows the gift of His Spirit liberally. The simple verb meant originally to furnish the chorus at one's own expense, hence to provide liberally or lavishly. As used in 2 Pet. i. 5, it means "have your faith well furnished with courage, and that courage well furnished with knowledge," etc. And so in our text the apostle is thinking of the rich abundance of spiritual supply furnished by the head, which only requires an open channel in order to communicate itself to every member which is by that vital current incorporated as a part of the one great structure. This being the meaning of the words and expressions used, we now pass on to inquire as to the special kinds of supply here intended. What are those adjusting and binding agencies and influences through which this spiritual supply is communicated? We have them set forth surely in those gifts of ministry bestowed by Christ on His Church. The two prominent ideas in the passage before us are, as we have seen, that of the fitting and that of the attaching together of the several members of the body. In order that each member may exactly fill the place destined for him, he must grow up to that measure which corresponds with the gift of Christ to him. He must therefore be fed with that spiritual nourishment which the divine Word supplies, and which is communicated by divinely called and qualified teachers. And in order that each member may be joined and brought into contact with the other members, he must be under the direction and control of a common government whose laws and ordinances he obeys. He must therefore recognise Church officers, whose function it is to administer discipline so as to secure and maintain the unity of the body of Christ. Thus the supply-communicating joints would be the teaching and ruling officers of the Church

or more generally those in the Church possessed of ruling and teaching charisms.¹

According to the effectual working in the measure of every part.—The first question to be decided is as to whether this proposition is to be joined to the preceding participles or to what follows. If we were to adopt the latter alternative, the meaning would be that the growth of the whole body was effected by means of supplies communicated from the head, in proportion to the activity shown by each part in its own particular measure. This would seem to involve the reduplication of the idea of proportion, so that either *κατ' ἐνέργειαν* (which is actually wanting in F, G, various minusc. and some patristic quotations) or *ἐν μέτρῳ* would be superfluous.² But for the apostle's purpose both terms are needed. He wishes to emphasise not merely the effectual working of each part of the body, but the obligation lying on each part to work up to that measure provided for by the gift of Christ, not beyond it (2 Cor. x. 13), but up to it. Hence it is better to connect the passage before us with the preceding participles "fitly joined and closely knit together." This union of parts is brought about in no mere mechanical way by outside influence, but by means of those very parts themselves when energised, each of them by the power gifted to them severally by Christ, operating in that measure which marks the limits and dimensions of the gift to each. In regard to each member of the body of Christ, his fitting into his place and his connection with the other members depend upon his reaching unto that measure which was originally applied to the gift of Christ destined for Him. If only each member reached to his own measure he would fit into his place exactly, and would so touch the other members at the precisely proper points of contact, and then the whole building would be complete. We thus treat the whole passage "being fitly joined . . . in the measure of every part" as one continued participial clause, and read the principal sentence thus—"The whole body maketh increase," etc. As to the relation of the sub-clauses within this long participial clause, it seems

¹ Compare Klöpper, *Brief an die Colosser*, p. 454, 1882.

² Klöpper, *Brief an die Epheser*, p. 137, 1891.

best to regard the second and third as co-ordinate to one another, and both subordinate to the first. The first part of the clause indicates generally the condition of the growth of the body, namely the proper development of each member, and the second and third parts describe this development as consisting in the distribution of supply for the head, and the orderly attention of each member to the discharge of the particular function assigned to it.

Maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.—These words with “the whole body” in the opening of the verse constitute the principal sentence. Were it not for the long intervening participial clause, it would run simply thus, “The whole body increaseth unto the edifying of itself in love.” The phrase “the body maketh increase of the body” is not to be characterised as a fault of style or an inadvertence, but simply as an unavoidable redundancy, in order to make the sentence perspicuous. A certain inexactness belongs to the phraseology, inasmuch as “the whole body,” as consisting of head and proportionately developed members, does not exist until this increase has taken place. What is here emphasised is the fact that the growth is accomplished from within by the parts of the body, which, on the accomplishment of this increase, really constitute the whole body. The head, from which all those supplies which promote growth proceed, is part of that body, and by the supplies sent out diffuses itself over the whole body. The body, to the construction or upbuilding of which those gifts of Christ to the Church have to contribute, has at the same time committed to its several parts or members its own edification by means of perfected relationship with Christ. And the apostle adds “in love,” to show that there is no selfishness and self-seeking in the personal appropriation of the gift. This is the spirit of the new life in which there is growth; that all be done “in love,” is the indispensable condition of sharing in spiritual increase (iii. 17, iv. 15). The phrase “in love” should be joined not to “maketh increase,” but to “the edifying of itself.”

On the whole of this difficult and involved passage the words of Chrysostom are worthy of being quoted. “The apostle,” he says, “expresses himself with great obscurity,

from his desire to utter everything at once. What he means, however, is this. In the same way as the spirit or vital principle, which descends from the brain, communicates the sensitive faculty which is conveyed through the nerves, not simply and in the same measure to all the members, but according to the proportion of each member,—to that which is capable of receiving more, more ; to that which is capable of less, less ; for this is root or source, viz. the spirit,—so also is Christ. For the souls of men being dependent upon Him as members, His provident care, and supply of the spiritual gifts according to a due proportion in the measure of every single member, effects their increase. . . . All these expressions he uses as tending to humility. For what, he seems to say, if this or that man receives more than another ? He has received the same Spirit, sent forth from the same Head, effectually working in all alike, communicating itself to all alike.”

SECT. VIII.—THE NEW LIFE (Chap. iv. 17—v. 21).

This long passage deals with the new life of the Christians, contrasting it with the old life of heathenism out of which they had passed, warning them against any return to it, or any compromise with its principles and practices, and exhorting them to strenuous endeavour after holiness and the imitation of Christ as the revealer of God’s mind and will.¹ What strikes us at once as we pass from the earlier chapters of the epistle to this later part, is the contrast in the apostle’s treatment of his readers when he turns from dealing with doctrine to deal with questions of morality and particulars of daily conduct. He could speak to those Ephesians freely about the mysteries of the faith, but when the subject is the moral life, he has to begin by laying down the most elementary principles, and warning them against the most evident and even atrocious forms of vice. When we consider that the people to whom he writes were only very recently rescued from paganism of the peculiarly corrupt type of an Asiatic city, and that they were still living in daily intercourse with those who con-

¹ This contrast is remarked upon and admirably discussed by Dale, *Lectures on Ephesians*, pp. 294–307.

tinued to follow the most debasing customs, we need not be surprised to find that even among those whose intellectual culture was uncommonly high, and who therefore made rapid advance in the understanding of the truths of revelation, the awakening of the moral consciousness and the permanent elevation of the moral tone could only be effected by means of protracted and laborious inculcation of those foundation principles which, when wrought out and applied in every direction, would bring about a complete revolution of the life. What had to be overthrown were not merely the habits of a lifetime, but the customs of a race and modes of life that had prevailed through generations. There was heredity, as well as personal bent and inclination, to work against. We can scarcely form any conception of the moral pollution which characterised every class of society in those most degenerate days of paganism. Much has been said in these times of the beauty and attractiveness of pagan society, and quite recently an elaborate attempt has been made, by a singular perversion of facts, to show how much the world has suffered by the substitution of the Christianity of the fathers for the pure and elevated teaching of pagan sages.¹ On the contrary, all contemporary history substantiates the apostle's estimate of the moral condition of the pagan world of his day. The stinging sarcasms and bitter satires of Juvenal and Persius are proved, by the calm and deliberate statements of the most reliable historians, to be no exaggerations. When we have read what Tacitus and Suetonius and Seneca and Pliny have to tell of the state of society in their own times, we shall cease to wonder at the eagerness of the apostle's appeal and the plainness of his speech, when he warns his young converts, even those of them who had made most distinguished progress in the knowledge of true Chris-

¹ *Paganism and Christianity*, 1891, by J. A. Farrer. The following is a specimen: "The moral teaching of the pagans is on a purer and higher level than that of the fathers, just as the lives of the pagans, Prætextatus, Themistius, or Libanius, rise far above those of their leading Christian contemporaries." He does indeed say that it is not the religion of Christ but the patristic interpretation of it that he repudiates. But his preference of even the most distinguished and worthy pagan sages to the leaders of the Christian Church in the second and third centuries is an utter perversion of history.

tian doctrine, against such abominable sins as should not so much as be named among saints. The condition of the age made it indispensable that they should be named.¹

(1) *Regeneration* (chap. iv. 17-24).

Ver. 17-24. In these verses we have the contrast of the old and new graphically described. On the one hand is the life of alienation from God; on the other, of reconciliation to God. The fact that man's life in a state of nature is separated from God, is regarded by the apostle as sufficient to account for all the vices that disfigure the lives of the heathen, even in the most abominable and detestable excesses. But the new life is a thorough-going contrast to all this, just because it starts from fellowship with God. It is no mere moral improvement and reform, but a renewal of spirit and a new creation after God; and therefore it can brook no compromise with the old manner of life, but demands a complete wrench and thorough severance from the very first and all through.

Ver. 17. *This, then, I say and testify in the Lord.*—This formula is not found in precisely the same terms elsewhere in Paul's writings; but we may compare with it 1 Thess. ii. 11, 12. There is an evident resumption of the thought with which the apostle started in ver. 1. When, in the beginning of the chapter, the apostle proposed to enter upon the directly ethical part of his epistle, he found it necessary to enlarge upon the nature of the Christian calling as from God, who supplies the means for its realisation. Having set down these indispensable preliminaries, he now passes on to the main question. By issuing his exhortation in the name of the Lord, as in the beginning of the chapter he had issued it as

¹ The most readily accessible general description of pagan society in the apostolic age will be found in—Uhlhorn, *The Conflict of Christianity*, transl. from 3rd ed., 1880, especially Bk. i. chap. ii. pp. 42-149, "The Moral Condition of the Heathen World;" Lecky, *History of European Morals*, 3rd ed., vol. i. chap. ii. pp. 161-335, 1877, "The Pagan Empire;" Tholuck, *Nature and Moral Influence of Heathenism* (Bibl. Cab.), 1840; Lightfoot, "Essay on Paul and Seneca" in *Comm. on Epistle to the Philippians*, 6th ed., pp. 270-328, 1881; Schmidt, *Social Results of Early Christianity*, 1885. For contemporary and unbiassed testimonies, besides Juvenal, Persius, Martial, Seneca, see especially Pliny, *Natural History*, xiv. 142; and with immediate reference to Ephesus, Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*, iv. 2.

the prisoner of the Lord, he gives to it peculiar solemnity and authority. What he *says* is said in the form of a divinely authenticated commission. It is God's ambassador who speaks, and he speaks officially.

That ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk.—It suits the turn that the apostle's thought has taken, that he should now deal with the question first of all from the negative side. What he warns his readers against is conduct after the pattern of that of the Gentiles. The Authorised Version "other Gentiles," or "the rest of the Gentiles," follows a text, defended on internal grounds by Ellicott, which is absolutely without good MS. authority. The term *λοιπαί* is not found in \aleph^* , B, D*, F, G, etc. The reading as it stands in these was evidently found difficult, inasmuch as *τὰ ἔθνη* was used in chap. iii. 1 to designate "Gentile Christians," and the explanatory addition that made all things plain, would be readily suggested by the *ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποί* of chap. ii. 3. Here we need have no real difficulty in accepting what at first sight is the more difficult reading, and could never certainly have been substituted for the other. The context would make it plain to all readers that the apostle intended not the Gentile Christians, not the Gentiles generally, including the Christians, but that society out of which they had come, and from which they professed to have separated themselves. Hence what the apostle warns the Ephesians against is a mode of life of which most of them had been partakers, and with which all of them had been familiar. The society of Ephesus was pagan, although in the city a large Jewish colony had long been established. The apostle could quite appropriately speak of the Ephesians as walking in the ways and customs of the Gentiles. And now he addresses those who have come out of that society, whether as Jews they were originally onlookers more or less influenced by the sights and sounds around them, or as Gentiles they were by race actually reared in the very atmosphere of that pagan life, and exhorts them all to show themselves separate, and uncontaminated by the evil taint. Besides, the apostle is anxious to obliterate the distinction of Jew and Gentile in the Christian Church, and here in Ephesus, where the Gentile

section seemed inclined to overshadow the Jewish, as in Galatia the Jewish seemed desirous of overshadowing the Gentile, he gives the separatist name of Gentile to that mode of life which he would have them leave behind among the things of the past.

In the vanity of their mind.—The word “vanity” (*ματαιότης*) occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in Rom. viii. 20 and 2 Pet. ii. 18, in the general sense of emptiness. So in the LXX. it is used to translate the Hebrew *הֶבֶל* as applied to the gods and worship of the heathens in Jer. ii. 5, viii. 19, x. 3, xiv. 22; Deut. xxxii. 21. It is the word that occurs throughout Ecclesiastes in the pathetic refrain, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” The corresponding adjective *μάταιος* is similarly used in Acts xiv. 15; 1 Cor. iii. 20; 1 Pet. i. 18. It is quite true that this term is not restricted to what is ordinarily styled idolatry, but the whole circle of vices to which it points is regarded as the concomitant of idolatry. Where the objects of worship are vain, empty shadows, the morality which characterises the worship will show itself in all departments of the life. Chrysostom makes good use of this clause as a text for denouncing the foolish superstitions which find occasions of fear in all sorts of insignificant occurrences. “They were afraid where no fear was; but the things which they ought to fear those they fear not. Let us regard but one thing as terrible, that is, sin; and if there be not this, let us scorn all the rest, and him that brought them in, the devil” (comp. Homilies in Lib. of Fathers, v. 239–241, 1843). In contrast to the completeness or fulness that characterises those who are in Christ (Col. ii.), is this emptiness in respect of all true spiritual qualities which characterises the Gentiles alienated from God. The attempt made by Trench (*Synonyms of the New Testament*, xlix. 180–184, 1888) to distinguish between *κενός* and *μάταιος*, as meaning respectively *empty* and *aimless*, is not successful. In *ματαιότης* the idea of aimlessness is certainly present and prominent, but only as a necessary element in, or characteristic of, the emptiness. In the apostle’s view the idol is nothing, and the worship of it therefore fails in securing the end which worship should serve. Hence all that the

apostle brings against the idolatry of the Gentiles in this present clause is simply the negative charge that it did not serve to arrest the downward career of the sinner, nor to elevate him above the degradation of a life of sense.—Further, it is said that the highest part of their nature, which was capable of and destined for spiritual exercise, has been debased by being restricted to a sphere in which there is nothing present adequate to its capacities and fitted to satisfy its requirements. What the religion of the Gentiles offered to the spiritual nature of men was distinctly *unprofitable*. Those who follow these vanities become vain, empty in that very part of their being where the glory of their nature should be seen. So in Rom. i. 21 the heathen are said “to have become vain in their reasonings” (comp. 3 Macc. vi. 11; Wisd. xiii. xiv.).

Ver. 18. *Being darkened in the understanding*.—By this and the following statements the vanity which characterised the pagan manner of life is accounted for. This clause should be connected not with the “ye” but with “the Gentiles” of the preceding verse. The natural state is described as one of darkness (Rom. i. 21, xi. 10; 1 Thess. v. 4), while that of believers is one of enlightenment (chap. i. 18, and 1 John generally). Meyer has correctly pointed out that the mind (*νοῦς*) of the previous verse has a twofold significance, the *intellectual* and the *practical*. The present clause attaches itself to the intellectual side. The vanity of the mind, as intellectual, is occasioned by the darkening of the understanding (*διάνοια*). This term is used to designate the mind as the faculty of understanding. By it we form intellectual conceptions and judgments, and thus we become possessed of those thoughts which constitute the furniture of our minds. “In *διάνοια* the spiritual element in the sensible life comes out as a process of close and thorough scrutiny of outer objects, and as a special outward attitude of the soul. It is the inclinations that lead to thought and will bringing the soul into a moral and intellectual intercourse and connection with the outer world (Heb. viii. 10, x. 16; Matt. xii. 37). . . . When *νοῦς* loses its spirituality, a *moral stupidity* appears in its outward intercourse both of thought and will. It suffers

a corruption at once intellectual and moral" (Beck, *Biblical Psychology*, p. 71, 1877). False thinking, resulting from moral darkening, must necessarily have in it a moral element. We here touch upon the question of man's moral responsibility for his intellectual views and opinions. It is impossible to separate altogether the intellectual and moral elements of man's being, just because together they constitute the one nature. We can form no intellectual judgment which is not more or less affected by the moral state of the thinker. Hence in Col. i. 21 we find that the directly ethical alienation from God, dealt with in the clause following our text, is spoken of as an alienation of the understanding (*διάνοια*).

Being alienated from the life of God.—This clause is strictly co-ordinate with the preceding, as further descriptive of that life followed by the Gentiles, against which the apostle warns those who believe. It describes that life according to its distinctive moral character in respect of conduct, as the last clause did in respect of intellectual judgment and belief. But just as the darkening of the understanding involved a decidedly moral element, so also the alienation of the life involves a voluntary act of the mind. The word "being alienated" (*ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι*) was used before by the apostle (ii. 12), in a precisely similar way, to describe the natural life as one of estrangement from God (comp. Col. i. 21). The term used implies that they had been originally in a relation of friendship, and had fallen into one of enmity. Its precise force here, as in LXX. of Ps. lviii. 3; Isa. i. 4; Ezek. xiv. 5, 7, seems to be that of the passive voice; for the fact that this alienation was brought about by themselves, though true, is not made prominent, but rather the origin assigned to this alienation of life in the subsequent subordinate clauses requires us to translate the verb as a strict passive, which would make the alienation a penal infliction from the hand of God because of sin.—The further definition of this alienation by the mention of "the life of God," as that from which the alienated became estranged, maintains the parallel with chap. ii. 12 by supplying an equivalent to the *ἄθροι* of that passage. Their alienation consists in deprivation of all personal vital union

with God. They have no share in that life which God lives. The corrupt life of pagan society is a repudiation of the life of God. It is worthy of notice, as strengthening the position that the walk of the Gentile here is primarily that of idolatry, viewed by the apostle as involving and leading to all the vilest enmities of a vicious life, that in Deut. xxx. 20, after the Lawgiver has warned the people of Israel against lapsing into idolatrous practices, he reminds them that to cleave unto the Lord is their life. The Gentiles are without any share in this life that flows from God. The life meant here is certainly the principle and not the manner of life. Goodwin (ii. 17) is wrong in interpreting "the life of God" to mean the life of holiness, for it is not the life which we behold in God's working, but the life which the Spirit inspires and communicates. At the same time we should keep this in view, that those who are strangers to the Spirit of life imparted by God are also without those fruits of holiness in the life which the presence of this Spirit of life produces.

Through the ignorance that was in them.—This assigns the cause of the alienation in terms that would not be altogether suitable if applied to the darkening of the mind, which is rather the result of ignorance. The idea of alienation has led the apostle to an ignorance which accounts for, but does not excuse, the assuming of this attitude toward God on the part of men. The use of the word "ignorance" (*ἄγνοια*) in Acts iii. 17, xvii. 30; 1 Pet. i. 14, points to the absolute want of knowledge; and the peculiar descriptive phrase appended, "that was in them" (*τὴν οἰσταν ἐν αὐτοῖς*), not merely "their ignorance," emphasises the fact that their ignorance had become an inherent quality of their nature, inwrought into their inmost being.

Through the hardening of their heart.—This gives the cause of that ignorance. It was self-induced. Their hearts were hardened; and, as the result of this hardening, they became ignorant. According to Rom. i. 19, men had originally received such a discovery of God in the very constitution of their nature, that, had they not *held down* the truth in righteousness and stifled their convictions by a sinful life, they would not have been ignorant of God. It was this hardening

of the heart which put that ignorance in them.—The word “hardening” (πώρωσις) originally means covering with something callous, a thick skin, and hence came to mean rendering anything impervious to impression. The repetition of acts of sin renders the heart hard, so that God’s truth makes no impression upon it.—Meier is wrong in introducing here the distinction of Jew and Gentile, and making the hardening refer to the former and the ignorance to the latter. The ancient Church rightly regarded ignorance and hardening as ordinarily a progressive departure from God and holiness. Here the apostle understands by hardening, the result of that wilful stifling of convictions from the truth which so encases the heart with armour, impressive proof that their most inward condition is that of ignorance.

Ver. 19. *Being such as, wanting feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness.*—The details of actual life which characterise those estranged from God are here described. In ver. 18 we had the condition of the sinner’s inner being, here we have its outward manifestation described.—The phrase “wanting feeling” (ἀπηλγηγότες from ἀπαλγείν), not used elsewhere in Scripture (hence the name Ἀπηλγημένοι given to the Indian fakirs), connects this verse with the close of the preceding verse. The heart which has undergone such a process of induration has lost its sensitiveness, and this loss, inasmuch as it pertains to the heart and spiritual part of man’s being, is not physical but moral. They have no longer any sense for the true and the good. The conscience has become callous, seared as if with a hot iron (1 Tim. iv. 2). “The usual symptom of their having been forsaken by God is the insensibility to pain, which is here described *being past feeling*. Unmoved by the approaching judgment of God, whom they offend, they go on at their ease, and fearlessly indulge without restraint in the pleasures of sin. No shame is felt, no regard to character is maintained” (Calvin).—What was attributed to God’s judicial act in Rom. i. 24 is here assigned to man’s own conduct. They gave *themselves* (ἐαυτοὺς) over to the vilest forms of wickedness. “Lasciviousness” (ἀσέλγεια) means, originally, what is fitted to excite disgust, outrageous and shameless lust (2 Cor. xii. 21; Gal.

v. 19; 2 Pet. ii. 7). It is wantonness which has thrown all restraint aside. It is precisely the description we would have expected of the conduct of those whose consciences were seared, and who had ceased to have any moral feeling. The restraints of public opinion, conscience, divine threatenings, are no longer of any avail. They have become what, with strict propriety, we call "abandoned characters."

To the working of every sort of uncleanness with greediness.—The unbridled wantonness of those God-forsaken sinners was shown in the eagerness with which they entered on the perpetration of all manner of wickedness. The description of the zeal with which they engaged in their evil practices as *πλεονεξία* is somewhat remarkable. As Lightfoot shows (Col. iii. 5), "impurity" and "covetousness" (*ἀκαθαρσία*, *πλεονεξία*) divide nearly the whole domain of human selfishness and vice. The word has here only an accidental connection with uncleanness. It may be exhibited in the most extreme form, where no charge of impurity can be brought. It is, as Trench well expresses it, "the fiercer and ever fiercer longing of the creature which has forsaken God to fill itself with the lower objects of sense" (*Synonyms of New Testament*, 10th ed., p. 84, 1886); the particular objects of sense upon which the greedy desires of the God-forsaken man is said in our text to fasten themselves to every sort of uncleanness. Hence they work all manner of impurities with the eagerness of those who covet the opportunities, and so with enthusiasm avail themselves of them.¹

In this terrible description, just as in Rom. i. 24–32, the apostle is not speaking of individual Gentiles but of the pagan world as a whole. The apostle was well aware that among the Gentiles there were and always had been individual examples of noble virtue, men who lived up to the light

¹ See an admirable *use* of this statement by Goodwin on "Aggravation of Sinning against Knowledge," *Works*, iv. 163–187, especially 185. "When a man knows how dearly he must pay for it, there is an expectation of judgment embittering all. Therefore the Gentiles sinned with more pleasure than we. Therefore, Eph. iv. 18, 19, the apostle, speaking of them, says that through their ignorance and darkness and want of feeling they committed sin with freedom, and so with more pleasure, they not having knowledge or hearts sensible of the evils that attend upon their courses."

which they had, and in accordance with the law of God revealed in their nature. He speaks of the general influence of heathenism upon society as a whole. Even after mentioning some of the debasing vices, he says to the Colossians, "in which ye also walked aforetime, when ye lived in them" (iii. 5-7; comp. Eph. v. 3-8).

Ver. 20. *But ye have not so learned Christ.*—The abruptness of the style of this verse is intended to indicate the completeness of the contradiction between the Christian life entered upon and that life of nature which had been forsaken. The opposition was so thorough-going; that there could be no thought of return, or even of the slightest approach to accommodation or compromise. He had drawn the dark picture of the state of pagan society, so that argument might be unnecessary when he proceeded to declare that those who have believed in Christ can have nothing in common with it.—In this statement the apostle shows what it is that constitutes this irreconcilable separateness of the two parties. Believers have learnt a lesson of such a kind and in such a way that they can no longer continue to give any place to these old thoughts and desires and ways. What we learn becomes part of ourselves and is incorporated into our very being. And in this case the lesson learnt is Christ Himself. The believer by his faith appropriates Christ, puts on Christ, so that of all the acts of his spiritual life he can say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me." If the lesson, Christ, be thus learned, as it ought to be by each believer, the life of the disciple, like that of the Master, must be in direct antagonism to that of the world. Those who thus learned Christ know Him in their personal experience as a resurrection power (Phil. iv. 9). False teachers might come teaching Christ after another fashion, so as to allow continuance in a vicious, immoral life; but it was not thus they had been taught. The lesson, Christ, had been so taught them that they must know that there is no concord between Christ and Belial. Christ, the very antithesis of all sympathy and tolerance of sensuality in any form, was the subject of all apostolic preaching (Gal. i. 16; 1 Cor. i. 23, etc.). Here, as in Titus ii. 11, 12, the apostle answers those who said that the teach-

ing of salvation by Christ and not by the law led to licence and disregard for the demands of law (Gal. v. 13).

Ver. 21. *If indeed ye have heard Him.*—The whole epistle proceeds on the supposition that they had heard and received Christ. “The particle (εἴγε),” as Bengel says, “does not lessen but heightens the force of the exhortation.” If it were so that they had learned Christ in such a way as to admit of their living in their old heathen ways, then it was not really Christ they had heard about and learned at all; which, on the supposition of the whole letter addressed to saints and believers, is absurd. The statement of ver. 20 could be repudiated only upon the acceptance of a theory too outrageous to call for any consideration. It need scarcely be said that the apostle does not assume that his readers had heard the historical Christ during His earthly life personally. And yet we must not make the words “ye have heard Him” merely equivalent to the words “ye have heard of Him.” The thought of the apostle is that Christ is an ever-living presence in His Church for the evangelisation of the world, so that every voice heard that leads to God is Christ’s voice. And what he specially thinks of here is that first heard sound of the voice divine which differentiates our life now and for ever from what it had been. This is my beloved Son,” says God to the soul that first comes into contact with Christ, “hear Him.” No one has heard Christ after this fashion, and retained or wished to retain his old sinful ways. And observe, it is simply a question of having heard or not having heard. It is not, if ye have heard aright, but if ye have heard at all. The emphatic word is “Him” (αὐτόν), if it be really *Christ* whom you have heard.

And have been taught in Him.—This “in Him” (ἐν αὐτῷ) of our text, which is made prominent by being placed at the beginning of the clause, is the central characteristic thought of the whole epistle. This is the position in which alone any spiritual blessing is possible. It is into this position that we are brought when once we have heard Him. This initial hearing, which brings us into relation with Christ, places us “in Him;” and then being in Him we receive His teaching. It is Christ’s own requirement in reference to His

disciples, "Abide in me." Then as "in Him" we are taught. The three verbs learn, hear, teach, are used in a strictly appropriate manner. The broad comprehensive statement is "ye have learned Christ" (ἐμάθετε). Then under this are embraced the two subordinate statements, "ye have heard Him" (ἠκούσατε) in the call of converting grace, and "ye have been taught" (ἐδιδάχθητε) as converted men, through the instruction of the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

As is truth in Jesus.—This clause is connected with what precedes and with what follows. It indicates the manner and kind of teaching which the apostle assumes the Ephesians have had, and it characterises the statement immediately afterwards made as to the imperative obligation of believers on the part of those who are in fellowship with Christ. The teaching which Paul supposes them to have had is according to truth, and that truth is specially defined as truth in Jesus. This truth is not primarily that uprightness of life which is according to divine truth, but rather that truth of the understanding which rejects what is false, and which, as applied to moral and spiritual things, is necessarily of an essential moral character. The hearing and the teaching of Ephesian believers can be described as true, because He who is truth is the subject upon which they are exercised. All who have heard Christ have heard the truth, and those who are in Him are in the truth, and in that sphere or element they are receiving their instructions.—While in the previous clauses it was *Christ* that was spoken of, here it is *Jesus*. By this change from the official to the personal name of our Lord, the apostle means to call the attention of his readers to the historical manifestation of the Christ in Jesus of Nazareth. Those false teachers, who threatened the peace and purity of the Asiatic churches, all preferred to hold by Christ—maintained, indeed, that they only declared the true doctrine of the Christ. Their Christ, however, was not identified with the incarnate Son of God, who bore the name of Jesus. They were either mere *ideas*, or, if they were represented as having any form or shape, it was a mere phantom, a *docetic* and not a really human manifestation. If that was the Christ they had heard and been taught, it was very possible, nay, it was only too

certain, from specimens of Gnostic teaching even in the apostolic age, that permission would be given, and even, it might be, an imperative injunction enforced, to continue the practice of pagan vices and to perpetuate their old manner of life. There were most probably even then forerunners of Marcion among Gentile hearers of the apostle's preaching, who had been roused to an exaggerated antagonism by the insolent pretensions of Jewish bigots, so that they were inclined to cast off all allegiance to the God of the Jews, and to repudiate all obligation to observe and obey His laws. The teaching that was in accordance with such a Christ is here set to one side. What the Ephesians had learned was Christian truth, as set forth in Jesus. In order, then, to answer what is truth, we have to go back to the historical life of the Christ as Jesus of Nazareth. Here we have truth, not in an abstract but in a concrete form, yet not imperfect but absolute. John in his First Epistle (iv. 1-3) distinguishes the false and the true according as they repudiate or acknowledge the Christ incarnate in Jesus. It is in relation to this *Jesus* that, in the same epistle, John proceeds to say that the Son of God has given us an understanding to know Him that is true, and that we ourselves are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ (v. 20). Being in Him that is true, we walk even as He walked, and so we put away and keep away from us all that has no place in Him.

Ver. 22. *That ye put off*.—This is the substance of that truth which is in Jesus. Fellowship with Him means separation from sin. The figure used here (*ἀποθέσθαι*) is that of divesting one's self of his clothes. It is used in its natural and primary sense in Acts vii. 58. It is used in precisely the same sense as in our text in Col. iii. 8; James i. 21; 1 Pet. iii. 21; Heb. xii. 1. "To put off is not to lay aside for a time and take it up again, for so too many put off sin as appeareth, which at night they lay aside and take up in the morning; but this doth note all one thing with those phrases, to crucify the flesh (Rom. vi. 6), to mortify our earthly members (Col. iii. 8), to purge out all corruption of flesh and spirit (2 Cor. viii. 1), to offer up ourselves a sacrifice (Rom. xii. 1). So to put off is to forsake and die to our corruptions" (Bayne).

By the use of the word "ye" Paul emphasises the fact that this truth is a matter of personal experience, realised by personal struggle after a life of holiness.

As concerns the former conversation.—This indicates more precisely what it is that is dealt with in this putting off. It has reference not to something merely hypothetical, or to some merely conceivable state of matters, but to the actual setting aside of that which had formerly characterised their lives. What, in the language of the figure used, had been their daily garb in time past is now to be laid aside. The word here used for conversation or manner of life (*ἀναστροφή*) occurs in a similar sense in Gal. i. 13; 1 Tim. iv. 12; 1 Pet. i. 15, 18, ii. 12, iii. 1, 16, etc. The adjective former (*πρότερος*) does not occur elsewhere in Paul's writings, but we have the adverb *πρότερον* in 2 Cor. i. 15; Gal. iv. 13.¹ This former manner of life has been described in the previous verses, and embraces the entire compass of the moral life of man before conversion. It is with this, with all of it, that the apostle insists a complete and lasting breach be made.

The old man.—This phrase describes the nature or state of being in which that former conversation or manner of life was carried on. It forms a convenient descriptive denomination of the whole range of principles and habits that went to make up the being of the unregenerate man. The name occurs in Rom. vi. 6; Col. iii. 9. This "old man" (*ὁ παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος*) does not mean man's original nature, which would have been more exactly described as *ἀρχαῖος* or original, but simply that sinful condition which in time preceded the renewed condition of the regenerate. As Theodoret has well said, "It is not the body but the spotted garment of sin that he who is baptized must put off." This condition, as concerns the Christian, has become antiquated. It was crucified, it died, when Christ, who died to sin on the cross, was accepted as Redeemer (Rom. vi. 5, 6). So, in Heb. viii. 13, the law is described as antiquated; and in Ignatius, *Epistle to Magnesians*, viii. and x., reference is made to antiquated fables

¹ This same phrase is used by Heraclion (*Extant Fragments in Texts and Studies*, i. 4, p. 83, 1891) in reference to the life of the woman of Samaria before her conversion.

(παλαιοὶ ἀνωφελεῖς) and to Judaism, which is described as vile leaven that has waxed stale (παλαιωθῆσθαι). Thus the believer is to regard his former manner of life as something that he is entirely done with. Calvin expounds the phrase of original sin. "In two persons, Adam and Christ, the apostle describes to us what may be called two natures. As we are first born of Adam, the depravity of nature which we derive from him is called the *old* man; and as we are born again in Christ, the amendment of this sinful nature is called the *new* man. He who desires to put off the old man must renounce his nature." In the idea of the apostle this is certainly included, but also something more. Writing to believers, Paul seeks to show them that all the doings which marked the unregenerate life in the world must be set aside as elements in, and characteristics of, this old man.

Which waxeth corrupt according to the lusts of deceit.—Here the apostle first of all describes the condition of the old man and the direction in which he is moving, then he shows what the influences are which impel the old man in that direction, and finally he tells what the nature of these influences is.—As to the condition of the old man and the direction toward which he tends, the apostle says, he waxeth corrupt (φθειρόμενος). The old man is represented under the figure of a living organism. It grows, but its growth is in corruption. The elements that are growing in strength from day to day are destructive in character, and as they increase they bring the day of utter destruction nearer and nearer. It is the spread of decomposition in the body that can only end in death. Sin is the leprosy of the soul; "it eats as doth a canker."—This progress in corruption is carried on by means of the lusts or passionate desires (ἐπιθυμίαι) of the unrenewed nature.¹ The direction toward corruption and ultimate destruction is determined "*in accordance with*" those lusts. Those motive powers of the ungodly life are the passionate impulses which should be under control, but which, in the inverted state of matters, have been allowed to assume the control. The corruption is thus appropriately described as originating and operating within. The corrupting process

¹ See Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § lxxxvii.

goes on under the influence of those lusts in which the flesh finds expression.—Then, again, those lusts which are allowed to assume control of the life are described as “lusts of deceit.” Just as the apostle speaks of “vile affections” (πάθη ἀτιμίας, Rom. i. 26), meaning lusts by which those who practise them dishonour themselves; so here “lusts of deceit” (ἐπιθυμίαι τῆς ἀπάτης) mean lusts which deceive those who give way to them. The lust makes promise of pleasure or benefit of some kind, but when it has been yielded to the result is disappointment. What we do under the impulse of those unruly desires gives neither the life nor the liberty which was promised, but only adds its contribution to the corruption that is preparing the whole being for destruction. Compare the expression in Heb. iii. 13, “the deceitfulness of sin” (ἡ ἀπάτη τῆς ἁμαρτίας). “These desires are, as it were, the tools and instruments by which deceit betrays and mocks men; the weapons used by illusions and lies to corrupt and mar the soul. They are strong, and their nature is to pursue after their objects without regard to any consequences beyond their own gratification; but, strong as they are, they are like the blinded Samson, and will pull the house down on themselves if they be not watched. Their strength is excited on false pretences. They are stirred to grasp what is after all a lie.¹”

Ver. 23. *And that ye be renewed.*—This is the positive expression of the truth over against the negative of the previous verse. The word ἀνανεοῦσθαι has here a passive significance, as rendered in the translation, and is not middle, which in this verb has never a reflexive but only an intransitive sense. The meaning of the antithesis here is similar to that of 2 Cor. v. 4, “not that we would be unclothed but clothed upon;” and the meaning of the term itself is like that employed in chap. iii. 16, “strengthened,” and like that in 2 Cor. iv. 16;

¹ Maclaren, *Sermons*, 3rd Series, Lond. 1873. Three sermons, entitled respectively “The School of Christ,” “A Dark Picture and a Bright Hope,” and “The New Man,” giving the best popular exposition of vers. 20–24 which we have. He shows the profitlessness of the purely wilful life under three heads: 1. Because the object only satisfies for a time; 2. Because the desire grows and the object of it does not; and 3. Because, after all, these desires are each but a fragment of the whole nature.

Col. iii. 10, "renewed" (*ἀνακαινοῦσθαι*). As characterising the new man which is to be put on, in contrast to the old man which is to be put off, the "being renewed" (*ἀνανεούμενος*) stands opposed to the "growing corrupt" (*φθειρόμενος*). That we have here a verb compounded from *νέος*, and in Colossians a participle compounded from *καινός* and attached to the adjective *νέος*, calls attention to the different shades of meaning in those two words. As explained by Cremer, *νέος* "does not in itself displace or supplant the old, but simply excludes oldness and what pertains to age."¹ Hence in Col. iii. 10 the "new man" (*νέος ἄνθρωπος*) implies simply distinction and separateness from the old, whereas the renewing (*ἀνακαινούμενος*) implies the excluding of these qualities and characteristics which belong to the old. Here it is not the excluding of the old, which was previously insisted on in the *ἀποθέσθαι*, but the production of the new as something different.

In the spirit of your mind.—These words describe the sphere in which the renewal is carried on. It is a renewal that affects the innermost being of the man, so that he who is thus renewed becomes in reality a new man. Beck would make the verb middle because he cannot conceive of the *πνεῦμα* as mere subject of renewal, but as actively producing this change upon the mind. But Rom. xii. 2, to which he refers, supports rather the contrary view, for there we have the passive "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind," where the renewing is naturally thought of as carried on in, and not by, the mind. All turns upon the meaning of *πνεῦμα*, which Beck insists means here the Holy Spirit. He does not succeed in showing that the New Testament anywhere speaks of the Holy Spirit in the regenerate as *τὸ πνεῦμα ὑμῶν* or *ἡμῶν*. Certainly he is wrong in saying that in Rom. viii. 16, "the Spirit Himself beareth witness with *our spirit*," our spirit is God's Spirit in us. In our text the whole phrase "the spirit of your mind" indicates the subject of renewal. It is not said, "Get a new Spirit, *i.e.* the Holy Spirit, into your mind," but "Get the spirit of your mind

¹ Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, p. 428, 1878 (comp. p. 323).

renewed." The phrase does not in itself, as Beck would have it, form a direct contrast to the phrase "the vanity of your mind" (ver. 17). The contrast is brought out only when the spirit of the mind has been renewed, and this contrast is brought about by the renewing and not simply by the presence of the *πνεῦμα*. The *πνεῦμα* was there before unrenewed, and then, notwithstanding the presence of the *πνεῦμα*, the *νοῦς* was still in vanity. The *πνεῦμα* of the old man was the *πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου* (1 Cor. ii. 12; comp. Rom. xi. 8; Isa. xix. 14; Hos. iv. 12, v. 4), and as such needs renewal.¹ The ablest and most satisfactory exposition of our text is to be found in Delitzsch, *Biblical Psychology*, chap. iv. § 5, pp. 217–221, 1869. The spirit of the mind is the innermost sanctuary of the heart. "There is not only a *νοῦς*, which according to its nature belongs to the *πνεῦμα*, and in the natural man is *νοῦς τῆς σαρκός* (Col. ii. 18), instead of *νοῦς τοῦ πνεύματος*, but, moreover, a *πνεῦμα*, which according to its nature belongs to the *νοῦς*, and is therefore inversely called *πνεῦμα τοῦ νοός*. What kind of *πνεῦμα* this is, is to be gathered from 1 Cor. xiv." What, then, the renewal does is to make the *νοῦς* spiritual again by relieving it from the dominion of the flesh, and giving to the *πνεῦμα* the place of control as governor of mind and heart. The mind as renewed receives all its impulses from the *πνεῦμα*, so that it is rightly called the spirit of the mind as that which animates and directs its thoughts and counsels. "The seat of grace and its chief dominion is the spirit of the mind, termed therefore the inner man, the hidden man, the law of the mind, which, giving forth laws and impressions to the outward, rules and commands it."²—All that can be said in favour of the view that the "spirit" in our text means "the Holy Spirit," is said by Ellicott; but neither he nor Meyer, who maintains the same view, are at all con-

¹ See Klöpper, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, p. 145, 1891. Pfleiderer (*Paulinism*, ii. 188, 1877) renders the phrase "with respect to the spirit of the mind," though he pronounces it an un-Pauline term of thought. He cannot, however, absolutely declare the doctrine of the renewal of the *πνεῦμα* of man by the *πνεῦμα* of God to be un-Pauline, but remarks simply that the expression does not occur in the older epistles. Comp. Weiss, *Biblical Theology of New Testament*, ii. 77.

² Goodwin, "Work of the Holy Ghost," *Works*, vi. 174.

vincing. The dative here is not, as they hold, the dative of instrument, indicating the spirit by whom, but, as Winer (*Grammar*, § xxxi. 6a) rightly maintains, the dative denoting that in which, or in reference to which, an action or a state exists. And further, the apostle's use of the verb *ἀνανεοῦσθαι* in preference to *ἀνακαινοῦσθαι*, and his employing in doing so a word probably here introduced for the first time, shows that he wished to make the thought of the identity of the personality prominent. There is the *πνεῦμα* of the *νοῦς* in the new man as well as in the old. What constitutes the regenerate a *new* man is not the presence of the *πνεῦμα*, as would have been the case if *πνεῦμα* meant God's Holy Spirit, but its renewal, which can be conceived only of the human *πνεῦμα*.

Ver. 24. *And put on the new man.*—The word *ἐνδύσασθαι*, as well as *ἀποθέσθαι* and *ἀνανεοῦσθαι*, is dependent upon the *ἐδιδάχθητε* of ver. 21. This is the positive teaching which those receive who are in Christ and have learned Christ, as conceived of and presented by the apostle in his preaching. "The new man" (*ὁ καινὸς ἄνθρωπος*) is contrasted with "the old man" (*ὁ παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος*), and so means the regenerate man, in whom the new nature is produced after the pattern of Christ. The same idea is presented in "the new creation" (*καينὴ κτίσις*) of 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15. In Rom. xiii. 14; Gal. iii. 27, instead of the new man it is Christ Himself that is said to be put on. This should show the close relationship that subsists between Christ and the regenerate. This new nature consists in their real union with Him. So too Ignatius, in his *Epistle to the Ephesians*, xx., promises in a second tract to speak further with reference to the new man, Jesus Christ (*εἰς τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν*). The next clause shows that it is neither Christ nor the individual man, but the man who has appropriated Christ.

Which after God has been created.—This clause describes how the new man has come into being. It has not been gradually evolved out of a previous condition, but is created, called into being, to take the place of that which had become old and vanished away. "The new man is, as it were, a holy garb or personality, not created in the case of each individual believer, but created once for all (as Bengel says, *initio rei Christianæ*),

and then individually assumed" (Ellicott). This follows from the tense of the verb, which is aorist, *κτισθέντα*, not is created, but has been created. Our passage, together with the parallel passage in Col. iii. 10, was regarded by the older Protestant divines as affording the most important evidence in support of their doctrine of the divine image in man. Taken together, the passages seemed to show that God's image was first wrought in man when he had been renewed in redemption; and so they agreed that the image of God had been lost in the fall. But the *new man* of our text is evidently not man before the fall, but man after his second creation in Christ. The phrase "after God" in our text is interpreted by the phrase "after the image of Him that created him," of Col. iii. 10. Our *κατὰ Θεόν* may be compared to the *κατὰ Ἰσαάκ* of Gal. iv. 28, "children of the promise *like Isaac*," and here, created like God, after His likeness. Hence we have a close parallel to the original creation narrative in Gen. i. 26. But Müller (*Christian Doctrine of Sin*, iv. 3, ii. 352, 1868) is right in saying that we have no ground for concluding that the new creation in Christ, and the original creation in Adam, are the same, but rather that from the nature of the new relationship they cannot be identical. See, in opposition to this, Ellicott's note and his quotation from Irenæus, *Hær.* iii. 30, as indicating the doctrinal view which has most widely prevailed in the Church, that precisely what was lost in Adam was restored in Christ.

In righteousness and holiness of truth.—These words show in what respects the new man was made like God. In keeping with the general purpose of the apostle in this part of his epistle, prominence is given to ethical characteristics. And, indeed, it is just in regard to moral qualities that likeness between God and man is possible. Even when knowledge is added to the righteousness and holiness of our text, as it is in Genesis, we feel at once that it is knowledge gained and exercised in the moral sphere. In the parallel passage, Col. iii. 10, only knowledge is maintained; and in Wisd. ii. 23 it is said, "God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of His own essential being." Olshausen correctly enough characterises this last utterance

as presenting the *physical* aspect of the divine image in man, while that of Colossians presents the *intellectual*, and that of Ephesians the *ethical*. But the intellectual of Colossians embraces the ethical of Ephesians. Righteousness is distinguished from holiness as relatively more external. Holiness is the root out of which rectitude, as the strict conformity of life to the requirements of the law, must spring. There can be no righteousness in the life where there is not holiness in the heart. "The *δικαιοσύνη* denotes the right relation inwardly between the powers of the soul, outwardly to men and circumstances. On the other hand, *όσιότης* denotes the integrity of the spiritual life, and the piety toward God which it supposes" (Olshausen). This walk becoming the gospel, consisting in righteousness and holiness, is conducted in the region of *truth*. The expression is here carefully constructed, so as to present a contrast to ver. 22 of such a direct kind as readily to attract attention. As the instruments of death in the old man are lusts of *deceit*, so the instruments of life in the new man are righteousness and holiness of *truth*. There is also here a reference back to ver. 21, for the truth is that which received a concrete form as embodied in Jesus, whose righteousness and holiness the new man put on.

(2) *Bearing toward Others.*

Chap. iv. 25—v. 2.—The apostle now proceeds, from describing the moral and spiritual characteristics of the subject of regeneration, to show how the new man acts in reference to those around him. As a member of society, the Christian must show that his faith in Christ has made him a new creature. He must put off and put on. Everything calculated to disintegrate society — falsehood, angry passions, dishonesty — must be put away. That such things had to be mentioned, reflects severely upon the state of that society to which those Christians had before belonged. Selfishness and self-seeking had everywhere prevailed. The Christian, having put on the new man, must model his life with reference to others after the image of Him who created him. In Christ we see how God loved us, and as He loved us so must we love our fellows,

putting away selfishness, which for personal ends would deceive, hurt, defraud others. The rule is not merely, "Do to others as you would have others do to you," but "Do to others what Christ has done for you."

Ver. 25. *Wherefore having put off falsehood.*—The apostle thus connects his special with his general ethics. He has described generally the ethical condition of the new man, and now, on the basis of that, he proceeds to enunciate special precepts. The essential characteristic of the constitution of the new man was truth. The old man was under the control of lusts of deceit. This old man is put off (*ἀποθέσθαι*), and now, resuming with the same verb, he assumes that falsehood has been put off, as something for which there is no place in the new nature. Only he who, as the slave of sin, is under the dominion of selfishness, can live in falsehood. He who puts off the old man puts off lying alike in word or in deed.

Speak ye truth each with his neighbour.—This is an exact quotation of Zech. viii. 16, and differs from the LXX. only by the substitution of *μετά* for *πρός*. Jerome rightly gave the evident sense to the word neighbour as meaning "fellow-man;" Meyer and most commentators, on account of the following clause, restrict it to "fellow-Christian." If we look to the biblical use of the word, we shall find that according to Jewish exclusiveness it meant a fellow-Hebrew, but according to the teaching and example of Christ a fellow-man, of whatever race or religion he might be. It would, indeed, be very strange if, after requiring the absolute and unreserved abandonment of falsehood, any colourable excuse should be given for restricting the performance of that precept within a limited range.

Because we are members one of another.—The restricted application of the precept of our text has resulted from the interpretation given to this clause. It was very natural for Harless, Meyer, and Ellicott to connect the term "members" used here with the idea of the body of Christ employed in the earlier part of the epistle. But surely it is better to argue that the preceding context, with its reference to the neighbour as conceived of in the light of the gospel, widens the reference of the present clause to a similar universalism,

rather than to argue that this clause narrows, contrary to all New Testament usage, the application of the word neighbour in the preceding clause. There is enough said in this same epistle of the supremacy of Christ, as Head over all creation, to warrant us in interpreting the members ($\mu\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\eta$) of our text, after Chrysostom, as members of the body generally, and so used figuratively, not of the Church but of the human race. At first sight it would seem as if our text supported the idea of Fichte, that falsehood is denounced because of the outrage which it commits against the members of the community, whom it uses as means for selfish ends; and this aspect of the blameworthiness of falsehood certainly receives prominence here, rather than Kant's derivation of it as an offence against man's own moral dignity. But we have only to carry along with us the "wherefore" of the first clause of the verse, connecting the whole precept with the religious ethical principles of the preceding sections, in order to see that the ultimate ground is neither the individual man himself, nor the other members of his race, but God as absolute truth. In any case, it would be impossible for the true Christian to lie to those without, any more than to those within, seeing that he himself is in Christ, who is the truth.

As to the application of the precept against lying in difficult circumstances, where it would seem that serious evils would result from the telling of the truth, see a remarkably interesting and instructive discussion on "the lie of exigency" in Martensen, *Christian Ethics*, ii. 206-226, 1888; the calm and judicious statement of Harless, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 388-390, 1868, in which he reconsiders his own earlier opinions with reference to "the necessary lie;" and also a subtle and penetrating discussion of the same question in Rothe, *Theologische Ethik*, vol. iv. § 1065, pp. 346-372, 1870. In the closing note to section referred to, Rothe says that it cannot be doubted that holy scripture of the Old and New Testaments unconditionally condemns lying. After giving a list of instances in which saints are said to have lied, which were mostly cases of the kind just mentioned, he says that the sacred writers show evidently considerable sympathy with the offenders, though not approving of the act. It is surprising

to find a Puritan like Bayne making exceptions, "lest we should condemn of lying things that have no untruth." He makes four such exceptions: (1) Allegories, fables, etc.; (2) concealments, *e.g.* Abraham saying Sarah was his sister; (3) refusing or promising, and afterwards changing one's mind, *e.g.* angels in Sodom to Lot; (4) fictions or ironies, *e.g.* seeing a child with knife, I draw back of it over his head, and say I will cut his head off. It is quite evident that no defence should be made of cases 2 and 4.

Ver. 26. *Be ye angry and sin not.*—These words are an exact reproduction of the LXX. rendering of Ps. iv. 4. They are not given, however, as a quotation, and are simply used as a familiar form of expression to convey the idea intended by the apostle. As to the Hebrew original, Delitzsch thinks that this Greek rendering is quite satisfactory; but Perowne, Phillips, and Cheyne rightly decide in favour of the reading of our own version, "stand in awe or fear." The original word undoubtedly means to be agitated in mind, which may be from fear or from anger, and the context requires the emotion of fear rather than of anger. But Paul uses the familiar Greek phrase as expressing his present thought. He desires to see among the Ephesian believers a wholesome anger against sin. What seemed threatening was a tendency to an easy, indulgent estimate of moral evil and prevalent vices. He wishes to see them stirred up to enthusiastic and even violent opposition to what is bad. He would rather have fanatical resistance than supine indifference and complacent acquiescence. He warns them against heathenish want of feeling, spiritual insensibility (*ἀπάληγῃσιν*, ver. 19), which the conscience-seared exhibits in presence of sin. He will encourage neither stoical apathy nor epicurean indifference.¹ Instead, therefore, of rendering the passage as some are inclined to do, "If you cannot rid yourself of anger altogether, suppress it as much as possible, so that it be not reckoned sin," we find in it rather an express command to

¹ See a particularly good note, by much the fullest in his commentary, in Wordsworth, in which he discusses at length the views of Butler, as set forth in his Sermon viii. on "Resentment," and in his "Sermons on Human Nature." Compare also Paul's statement, 2 Cor. vii. 11, and the ascription of anger to Christ in Mark iii. 5.

manifest such anger, as otherwise they would be chargeable with sin. Be angry against sin, if you would not be held partakers in it. Not only may you be angry and yet avoid sin, but you must be angry if you would not be held the friend and patron of sin.

Let not the sun go down upon your irritation.—What is condemned here is not anger (*ὀργή*), but exasperation or exacerbation (*παροργισμός*, a word not used elsewhere in the New Testament), which consists in anger cherished and nursed until it is in danger of becoming pure vindictiveness. The verb *παροργίζειν* is used in precisely the same sense in chap. vi. 4. Even anger against sin, or rather against some particular sinful act, if retained long and brooded over, is apt to degenerate into bitterness. The word “irritation,” suggested by Ellicott, perhaps indicates most satisfactorily the point of transition where honest anger is just about to pass over into bitter hate. To prevent any such transition from taking place, the apostle proposes a time limit for the retention and expression of his anger. Probably the apostle was acquainted with some saying of the Pythagoreans, which suggested the peculiar form of expression. His meaning plainly is: In no case, however justifiable your anger, let it be of long duration.

Ver. 27. Neither give place to the devil.—By the name given to our great enemy here (*διαβόλος*), he is represented as the accuser, whose business it is to rouse strife, awaken jealousies, and embitter feuds between man and man. Wherever a spirit exists in which there is present any tendency in that direction, he obtains a habitation, a point from which he can carry on his malicious work. He cannot work in the world except through the agency of men. If he comes to us and finds nothing in us, as he did when he went to Christ, then we shall be doing something to thwart his evil activity. So the apostle exhorts, Do not give scope to the devil, by providing him an angry spirit in which and through which he may carry on his work. “When we walk in the spirit of the world, in vanity and the lusts of the flesh, when we are self-important, when we are heated with covetous desires, when we are irritable and impatient, we give place

to the devil, and he is seated in the house of the soul" (Pulsford).

"Be at enmity," says Chrysostom, "but be so with the devil, and not with a member of thine own. For this purpose it is that God has armed us with anger, not that we should thrust the sword against our own bodies, but that we should plunge the whole blade into the devil's breast."

Ver. 28. *Let the stealer steal no more.*—It is indeed startling to find that among those reckoned within the Christian Church were some who not only had been but still were thieves. Yet Paul had to teach the Corinthians (1 Cor. vi. 10) that thieves could not inherit the kingdom of God. The stealer (ὁ κλέπτων) of our text is probably intended to characterise one in whom the habit had been formed, and in whom the tendency existed, whether he had given way to it after his calling to Christianity or not. In any case his duty is plain, he must cease stealing.

But rather let him labour, working with his hands that which is good.—While we are certainly to understand by stealing in this passage just ordinary theft, we see from this injunction that the apostle would embrace in his exhortations others than common thieves. The thief does not labour, but takes without labouring what God has given as the reward of labour. "The force of the divine prohibition, Thou shalt not steal," says Nitzsch (*System of Christian Doctrine*, § 177), "must, according to Eph. iv. 28; 1 Cor. vi. 8; 2 Thess. iii. 6–12, go so far as to make the Christian purify himself from all habits and acts of the parasite, beggar, or sluggard, as well as from the sins of carelessness, breach of trust, and imposition." The word κοπιᾶν means to fatigue one's self with hard work; ἐργάζεσθαι means to work continuously, and especially in some particular appointed office. These two verbs occur together in 1 Cor. iv. 12, while we have the latter phrase in its present sense in 1 Thess. iv. 11. This is what the apostle proposes, as at once prevention and cure with reference to the thievish spirit. Martensen (*Christian Ethics*, iii. 134) calls attention to the honour and prominence given to labour during the middle ages, where trade guilds were the centres and dispensaries of all benevolence, as contrasting with the scorn

shown by the ancient pagan world to all toilsome work and manual labour, which was wholly relegated to slaves, who were denied the rank and the rights of men.—That which is good, the *αγαθόν*, is here evidently the honest and honourable, as contrasted with the shameful gains of dishonesty.

That he may have to give to him that hath need.—One must labour first of all to provide an honest maintenance for himself and his household (1 Thess. iv. 11, 12; 2 Thess. iii. 12), but the characteristic end proposed to the labourer by Christianity is that he may help others. The unselfishness of the Christian is shown, not in neglecting personal and family obligations, but in the endeavour, at the expenditure of toil, to provide a surplus, after meeting these, which may be used in benefiting a wider circle. The latter ground for labour is alone emphasised here, as that which might be least readily taken into consideration. The circle within which such kindness is to be shown is not restricted here, but extends to the whole range of neighbourhood. Yet the order in which such benevolence should be dispensed is indicated in Gal. vi. 10 as beginning with those of the household of faith. How this principle of Christian love manifested itself in early times in deeds of active charity, may be seen well stated in such books as Uhlhorn's *Christian Charity in the Ancient Church*, 1883, and Brace, *Gesta Christi*, 1883.

Ver. 29. *Every sort of corrupt word let it not go forth out of your mouth.*—The peculiar manner in which this verse begins seems to indicate, as Klöpper suggests, that the apostle when he started to write it had not decided whether to make it an affirmative or a negative sentence. In regard to meaning, the negative particle attached to the verb makes the opening “every” equivalent to “no.” As it stands, the prohibition is made all the more emphatic by opening with *πᾶς λόγος σαπρός*, and so applying to every sort of foul or polluting expression, whether the foulness lay in the literal phrase or in its suggestions and associations. The word *σαπρός*, which means literally *rotten*, *putrid*, does not occur elsewhere in Paul's writings, but is used by the evangelists of trees, fruits, fishes, which are useless (Matt. vii. 17; Luke vi. 43; Matt. xiii. 48). Chrysostom says, “Everything that does not fulfil its

own proper use is called *σαπρός*; and so in his homily on this verse he renders it "unseasonable conversation," and makes it include "idle back-biting, filthy communication, jesting, and foolish talking." So, too, the Latin translator of Theodore of Mopsuestia renders the word by *nequam*, which readily passes from the negative *worthless* to the positive *vile*. The *λόγος σαπρός*, then, is a word that had better be left unsaid, whether it be merely silly or actually filthy. The best commentary on it, as indicating the wide range to which it applies, is afforded by Col. iv. 6. The effect of the *λόγος σαπρός* on the community would be disintegrating, tending to sap its very foundations; at best it would be worthless, good for nothing, like salt that had lost its savour, and, in its worse form, actually hastening on moral decomposition and decay. Speech not seasoned with the salt of grace corrupts, because it does not preserve.

But if there be any good word [let it go forth] for edifying where there is need.—If one should have the capacity and opportunity for speaking a good word, he should use it. The good word is contrasted with the word that is good for nothing. Good conversation is that which is seasoned with grace. If one has such a word to communicate, let him utter it in case there be a call for it. To justify speech, it is not enough that it is of a generally edifying character, but it must be fitted to meet some special need in the community addressed. This seems to be the meaning of a somewhat obscure and difficult expression. The rendering given here is practically that of the Revised Version, "for edifying as the need may be," which again is based upon Tyndal's "to edifye withall when nede ye." The Authorised Version, "that which is good for the use of edifying," is a translation of *πρὸς χρείαν τῆς οἰκοδομῆς*, and not of the *πρὸς οἰκοδομήν τῆς χρείας* of our text.¹ The difficulty of the phrase led to the substitution in some old texts and versions of *πίστεως* for *χρείας*. The word *χρεία* is undoubtedly suggested by the closing phrase of the preceding verse. It is for him who is in need that the Christian should care by act and word,

¹ See an interesting note on this passage in Dr. Field's *Otium Norvicense*, pt. iii. 117, 1881.

that he may provide for his physical and moral well-being.

So that it may impart grace to the hearers.—The meaning of χάρις here is “grace,” as in Col. iv. 6, and the clause describes the end served by the sending forth of a good word, on an occasion and in circumstances where it is needed. That word becomes the channel of divine grace to those who hear it. Olshausen, with Harless, Meyer, Ellicott (the last-named would make it expressly spiritual benefit or blessing) thinks χάρις should be rendered “benefit,” because διδόναι does not suit the idea of “grace.” But chap. vi. 19 offers a convenient example of a similar use of this verb. On the other hand, Klöpper is wrong in defending the interpretation “grace,” on the ground that, from the context, it is evident that there can be no reference here to persons outside of the Church. The hearer is the neighbour in need, whom a good word may benefit, and the benefit thought of is nothing else than the grace of God that bringeth salvation. Equally objectionable is Klöpper’s understanding of the “grace” of our text, in accordance with Col. iv. 6, as *suavitas*, gracefulness imparted to the hearer—sweet, gracious affections awakened in his soul. What the apostle here contemplates is the utterance of gracious words in season, so that he who sends them forth may not only *save* himself but also him that heareth (1 Tim. iv. 16). It can be a word of salvation only as conveying God’s grace.

Ver. 30. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.—This hortative entreaty is closely connected with the preceding. Chrysostom aptly quotes 1 Thess. iv. 8, “He that despiseth, despiseth not man but God.” The sins against the Holy Ghost are not all of the deliberate and final sort described as blasphemy (Luke xii. 10), for which there is no forgiveness. The use of a λόγος σαπρός by one who has the Spirit dwelling in him is here said to *grieve* (λύπειν) that Holy Spirit. The same idea is expressed in Isa. lxiii. 10, where the ingratitude and disobedience of Israel, by grieving God’s Spirit, turned Him into an enemy, until they remembered the ancient days, and turned back in heart to God. Similarly, in Ps. lxxviii. 40, cvi. 33, the people are said to have defied God’s Spirit. In the

Shepherd of Hermas, II. x. 3, grief, as arising from doubt and anger, is said to grieve the Spirit: "Wherefore remove grief from thee, and offend not the Holy Spirit, who dwells in thee, lest He entreat God to depart from thee." He is offended by any unfit, unbecoming word, any λόγος σαπρός, because it jars upon His holiness. The very compass of the idea σαπρός, varying from idle and worthless to filthy and vile, gives us some conception of the comprehensiveness of the holiness attributed to God's Spirit, which resents, because opposed to, all frivolity and lack of earnestness, as well as to that which is positively and actively base.

In whom ye were sealed.—In relation to the preceding clause, this shows plainly that the residence of the Holy Spirit is in those who are warned against speaking corrupt words. Klöpper thinks that He is regarded as residing in the hearers, and is grieved by the utterance of any such word, as the Spirit dwelling in them. This undoubtedly sets forth an important scriptural truth, somewhat similar to the warning against giving occasion of stumbling to a weak Christian in whom the Spirit is present (Luke xvii. 1, 2). But it is clearly not the meaning of our apostle. It is the uttering with the mouth, and not the hearing with the ear, of which he is here thinking. Whatever the result of the hearing be, whether in the direction of strengthening the old man's love of sin, or of weakening it by awakening disgust and revulsion with reference to it, in any case he who utters it grieves the Spirit that dwells in him. And the grieving of Him is for us a very serious matter; for it is in Him that we have the seal of confirmation and establishment in grace. Whenever we offend against His holiness, we thereby turn Him into an enemy, so that He fights against us (Isa. lxiii. 10). The Christian then loses his peace and joy which come from his assurance of the divine favour. The Spirit who is grieved, no longer witnesses with his spirit (Rom. viii. 16). If we would have His sealing, we must not grieve Him in whom we were sealed. This sealing is spoken of as something experienced in the past, which, as a living experience, should continue with us.

Unto the day of redemption.—This describes the limit of

that sealing, and the end which it secures unto those who have it. The day of redemption is the great day, the day of the general resurrection, when those who have risen into a new life by the regeneration of grace will be raised into the new life of heaven. See Wordsworth's note. Those who are sealed in the Spirit have a divine guarantee that all that is contained in the idea of redemption will be realised by them and in them. We have redemption (i. 7) as an ideal or potential state, but we are sealed in the Holy Spirit for its perfect realisation as an actual state. Upon this Spirit the believer is dependent for all spiritual growth and development, and this dependence will continue until the work of grace upon him and in him is complete.

The latter half of the verse is clearly intended to make the restraint against sinning on the part of the child of God stronger, by showing how God must afflict Himself to afflict His child. The force of the appeal is, "Put not the Lord into these straits, if you have any love in you" (Goodwin, iii. 416). "For when a believer takes notice that the Spirit hath done all this for him, wrought all the grace he hath, and brought in all his comfort, he will have a respect to Him, and have a distinct tenderness to Him in that relation, as well as to Christ and to the Father" (Goodwin, viii. 470). "A sin is properly against the Spirit, when against that which is His proper work, which is to excite to good, to restrain from evil; and then we grieve Him when we sin against such a working of His, as wherein, like a father and as a friend, He gives counsel and direction to the contrary" (Goodwin, vii. 321). "Let this seal abide upon thy mouth, and never destroy the impression. Thou hast a mouth that hath the Spirit. Think what thou art saying, the moment thou givest birth to a word,—what words beseeem a mouth like thine" (Chrysostom).

Ver. 31. *Let all bitterness be taken away from you.*—Every sort of bitterness (*πάσα πικρία*), in every expression of feeling and act as well as word. This word indicates that fretful, irritable condition that arises from the studious cherishing of angry passions, and from the continued brooding over real or imagined wrongs. It manifests itself in venomous speeches,

and in a persistent sourness and unamiability of disposition. It can only be seen where the counsel of ver. 26 is disregarded, and occasions of annoyance allowed to rankle in the heart from day to day. Aristotle describes the *πικροί* as hard to melt, and as cherishing anger long, because they keep fast hold upon their wrath (*θυμός*). The condition of mind and heart described is thus brought about by retaining what God had commanded to put away, and is therefore a sinful state resulting from sinful acts.

And wrath and anger.—These are the immediate fruits of the bitterness spoken of. Wrath (*θυμός*) is the violent excitement and agitation of mind which the retention of angry feelings occasions. The bitterness may be concealed from others, but it causes an inward upheaval that shows itself in a violent explosion. This *θυμός* is *πικρία*, a bursting all restraints, boiling over, blazing up in rage. Anger, again (*ὀργή*), is this same emotion allowed to settle down into a more regular disposition and habit of mind. Eadie is quite wrong in describing it as the violent outburst of *θυμός*. Jerome defines *ὀργή* correctly: *Ira, quæ furore extincto desiderat ultionem, et cum quem nocuisse putat vult ledere*. Hence, in Revelation, *θυμός* is used of God in order to represent the fierceness of His anger (*ὁ θυμὸς τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ*, chap. xvi. 19): while the calm, settled habit of soul described by *ὀργή*, occasioned by irreconcilable hatred toward sin, is everywhere in Scripture ascribed to God. In our text it is an aggravated display of bitterness, because not a sudden and transitory ebullition of rage, but a permanent disposition of anger. In a eulogy of Elias, the author of Ecclus. xlviii. 10 says that the prophet was ordained “to pacify God’s anger” (*ὀργή*) before it burst forth in fury (*κοπάσαι ὀργὴν πρὸ θυμοῦ*), where it is correctly perceived that God’s ways are not as man’s ways. Not as with man at the beginning, but only in the end, does God express His anger in fury, when the patience of His holiness has been exhausted by persistent abuse, so that He must proceed to execute doom. The right order of derivation of these faults has been indicated as in our text in the Shepherd of Hermas, II. v. 2: “Of bitterness is begotten wrath, and of wrath anger.”

And clamour and evil-speaking.—*Κραυγή* is an onomatopoeic word meaning *croaking*, uttering harsh and shrill cries, giving vent to feelings in an unrestrained manner, as of anguish on the part of our Saviour (Heb. v. 7), joyful surprise (Luke i. 42; Matt. xxv. 6), grief (Rev. xxi. 4); but here giving way to rage in violent and boisterous speech. The first of this second pair is thus closely connected with the first of the previous pair. “Clamour,” says Chrysostom, “carries anger as a horse his rider; tie the horse’s feet, and you will throw the rider. . . . Never cry aloud at all, and then wilt thou never be angry at all.” Along with the idea of loudness there is also probably that of inarticulateness, as implied in the unrestrained expression of ungovernable rage. *Βλασφημία*, related to *κραυγή* as *ὀργή* is to *θυμός*, is that style of utterance which the sour and bitter of heart use after the fury that had expressed itself in clamour has assumed a calmer but more fixed and permanent form. It is evil-speaking systematically, and with calculation of effects, addressed to the compassing of another’s hurt. It is used here—as also in Rom. iii. 8, xiv. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 13, x. 30; Col. iii. 8; Titus iii. 2—of slandering our fellow-men; while in Matt. xii. 31; Mark ii. 7; Rev. xiii. 6, etc., it means blasphemy in the ordinary sense, as reproachful speech or bearing toward God.

With all malice.—By *πᾶσα κακία* the apostle seems to understand all sorts of wickedness directed to the injury of our neighbour. It is this disposition that finds gratification and shows eagerness in scheming mischief against others. “By this term,” says Calvin, “the apostle expresses that depravity of mind which is opposed to humanity and justice, and which is usually called *malignity*.” Compare Lightfoot in Col. iii. 8, and Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § xi., pp. 37-39, 1886. Malice will result as the hateful state of soul in the man who does not remove from his heart that bitterness which produces wrath, anger, clamour, and evil-speaking; but also this malignity of spirit will reflect upon and greatly intensify any further manifestation of bitterness.

Ver. 32. *But become ye kind to one another, tender-hearted.*—The apostle proceeds to describe the state of mind and feeling which he desires to see formed in the professed believers in

Christ. The becoming of our text (*γίνεσθε*) is related to the removing away of the previous verse (*ἀρθίτω*), as the putting on of the new man to the putting off of the old. Having laid aside the spirit of bitterness and its fruits, we are to receive the Spirit of love, that it may produce its fruits in our lives. Thus men who had been hateful and hating one another, *become* loving and helpful, doing good unto all men. They become "kind to one another" (*εἰς ἀλλήλους χρηστοί*) instead of manifesting bitterness. The epithet is used of Christ's yoke, in which there is no harshness, and because this so characterised the ministry of Christ, *χρηστός* and *χριστός* were often interchanged (Tertullian, *Apolog.* iii.) They become "tender-hearted" (*εὐσπλαγνοί*), literally, *having strong bowels*, instead of giving way to "wrath and anger." This word occurs again in the New Testament only in 1 Pet. iii. 8. It is also used in the apocryphal Prayer of Manasseh as an attribute of God, "of great compassion." The *σπλάγχνα* were regarded as the seat of merciful dispositions. See Lightfoot on Phil. i. 8.

Forgiving each other, even as God in Christ forgave you.—This is closely parallel to Col. iii. 13, with the addition of the words "in Christ" (*ἐν Χριστῷ*). As Klöpper remarks, Paul does not indeed elsewhere ascribe a *χαρίζεσθαι* to Christ, but in many places—2 Cor. viii. 9, xii. 9, xiii. 13; Rom. v. 15; Gal. i. 6—ascribes a *χάρις* to Him.—We have here, then, the explicit statement of the manner in which the kindness and compassionateness are to be shown, which suggests the renunciation of what is evidently the presupposition of that statement. We are to show our compassion by forgiving one another, which implies that forgiveness is generally needed. We and those around us are subjects for forgiveness, and God has treated us as such. There is some doubt as to the exact force of *ἐαυτοῖς* in the phrase *χαριζόμενοι ἐαυτοῖς*. Origen maintains that, from its reflexive force, it implied that what they did to others was really done to themselves. Ellicott thinks this doubtful; and Harless, Meyer, and most expositors make *ἐαυτοῖς* equivalent to *ἀλλήλοις*. Comp. Col. iii. 13, *ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων, καὶ χαριζόμενοι ἐαυτοῖς*. See Lightfoot's note, and Westcott on Heb. iii. 13, where we

have the injunction, "Exhort your ownselfs" (*παρακαλεῖτε εἰαυτοῦς*). The meaning seems to be, Forgive those who, like yourselves, are in need of forgiveness. Forgive, and think when doing so that thou art thyself one of that class needing to be forgiven.—The meaning thus given to the first part of the clause naturally suggests the addition—even as God forgave you. This also makes the meaning of *χαρίζεσθαι* quite plain. It is not merely to show one's self kind, as the word often means, but to pardon offences, and so to go beyond mere goodness and compassionateness.—God's forgiving is *in Christ*, as in Him He reconciles the world to Himself (2 Cor. v. 19).

The apostle puts his appeal in the form of a comparison, requiring us to do to others as God has done to us. "And yet," as Chrysostom says, "there is no comparison. For if thou shouldest indeed at this moment forgive any one, He will forgive thee again in return ; whereas to God thou hast neither given nor forgiven anything. And thou indeed art forgiving a fellow-servant ; whereas God is forgiving a servant, and an enemy, and one who hates Him."

Chap. v. 1. *Become ye, then, imitators of God.*—The *γίνεσθε οὖν* takes up and continues the thought of the last sentence. Also, as there, it is fitted to remind his readers that they had abandoned their proper position and had ceased from their rightful calling. Now, as forgiven in Christ, they had been received back into that household which they had by their disobedience forsaken. They are once again under the fatherly rule and direction of God. The Father, as distinguished from the mere administrator of law, Himself lives among His children, and presents before them His example of holiness, which, when imitated by them, will be for them a life of obedience to His holy law. The word *μιμητής* occurs altogether five times in the writings of Paul, and should be rendered not *follower* merely but strictly *imitator*. Klöpper remarks that Paul never speaks of imitators of God but *μιμηταὶ μοῦ* (1 Cor. iv. 16, xi. 1 ; 1 Thess. i. 6) and *συμμιμηταὶ μοῦ* (Phil. iii. 17) ; but this does not hinder his using the expression here any more than it prevents him describing himself as a *μιμητής* of Christ (1 Cor. xi. 1). In Heb. xiii. 7, we are enjoined to *imitate*, in the sense of reproducing, the

Spirit which animated those who have lived the life of faith. So the imitation of God is the reproduction in our lives, by the grace of God's Spirit, of the life of God. The previous sentence, however, indicates the particular aspect of the divine character, and that particular mode of its manifestation, in which it will be found imitable by us, and the apostle proceeds to define his exhortation, in accordance with this point of view.

As dear children.—Describing more particularly the animating spirit of those who will be imitators of God. Various motives might induce men to play the rôle of imitators of God—just as flatterers, office-seekers, etc., might become imitators of a prince or any other man of influence. We are to become imitators of God, for the love which we bear Him as children, who have had abundant proof of the Father's love. We are beloved children (*ἀγαπητά*), and in view of the Father's love to us we are called now to imitate Him. We do not imitate Him in His love because there was previously love in us to Him. It is the revelation of His love, the discovery that we make of it, that makes our imitation of God possible. So it is not said, "as loving children," but "as children who have been loved." We love Him, because He first loved us (1 John iv. 10), and love thus begotten shows itself in imitation.

Ver. 2. *And walk in love, as Christ also loved us.*—The walking in love is similar in meaning to the phrase of chap. iv. 15, "speaking the truth in love." It answers to Col. iii. 14, as the closing verse of the last chapter does to Col. iii. 12. This walking in love is co-ordinate with imitating God. If we are to be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect (Matt. v. 48), then it must be by our walking in that love which is the bond of perfectness. This walk will also prove our possession of those graces named in chap. iv. 32.—The pattern for us in this walk of love is Christ, and that in His manifestation of love toward us. In his earliest epistle Paul sets forth the self-sacrifice of Christ in a precisely similar way (Gal. i. 4, ii. 20).

And gave Himself up for us.—We have here a literal reproduction of Gal. ii. 20, only *we* being changed into *us*. The introduction of "us" here may very probably, as Von

Soden suggests, be due to the reminiscence of a familiar liturgical formula. This surrender of *Himself*, not merely of His possessions, was the supreme proof of His love, which gave it an altogether unique significance. It implies certainly "unto death," as it admits of no reservation. Comp. Rom. iv. 25. The phrase *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* means "in our stead," as in Rom. viii. 31; Gal. ii. 30; Eph. v. 25; Titus ii. 14. See the attempt of Usteri, *Entwicklung des Paulinischen Lehrbegriffes*, p. 115, 1851, to water down the meaning of the preposition, so as to eliminate from the passage the doctrine of substitution. A yet more elaborate endeavour in the same direction is made by Jowett, "Dissertation on Atonement and Satisfaction," in *Epistles of Paul to Thessalonians, Galatians, and Romans*, ii. 547-595, 1859.¹

An offering and sacrifice unto God.—These words indicate yet more distinctly the substitutionary character of Christ's self-surrender, describing it as sacrificial, and thus explicitly stating what the former clause implied, that He gave Himself even unto death for us. The *προσφορά* is the more general

¹ Pfleiderer (*Paulinism*, i. 97, 1877), speaking of Rom. v. 8-10, says: "The words *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* which occur here, and are repeated in many other passages, signify primarily indeed simply 'for our good;' but the connecting thought, both in this and the other passages, is that of a vicarious act. . . . One can hardly help further giving to *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* in this passage the meaning 'in our stead,' especially as the words *ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ*, which occur twice previously, can scarcely be rendered otherwise than in Christ's stead; *ὑπὲρ* is thus precisely equivalent to *ἀντί*." See also an interesting quotation on the different senses of substitution from Baur, given by Pfleiderer as a note on p. 110. In Crawford, *The Doctrine of Holy Scripture concerning the Atonement*, pp. 17-30, 1871, we have a careful examination of passages which speak of Christ as dying *for* sinners and *for* our sins. After showing that in many passages the preposition *ὑπὲρ* can only mean "instead of," he concludes: "It cannot be denied that the preposition *ὑπὲρ* may fitly enough convey the idea of *substitution*. And though we can hardly venture to say that, taken by itself, it necessarily has this sense in *all* the passages in which it is used of the sufferings of our Lord, we may safely affirm that in *some* of these passages the nature of the case and the tenor of the context clearly enough show that such is its signification" (p. 21). See also classical illustrations from Raphelius and Valekenarius, in Crawford's Appendix, p. 471. Baur, too, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, p. 155, as quoted by Crawford, p. 473: "From the preposition *ὑπὲρ* by itself the notion of substitution cannot indeed be inferred; but just as little can this notion be excluded from it. . . . It is not the vague *for*, which may stand in all possible relations, but it is the inmost immediate entering into another and putting one's self in his place."

term, designating offerings of all kinds, any sort of presentation to God, whereas *θυσία* signifies what is specifically a sacrifice offered by the priest upon the altar. These two terms are again found in combination in Heb. x. 5, in quotation from the LXX. of Ps. xl. 7.

For a savour of a sweet smell.—An exact reproduction of the statement regarding the acceptableness of Noah's sacrifice (Gen. viii. 21; comp. also Exod. xxix. 18, 25). With reference to the phrase regarding Noah's sacrifice, Delitzsch, after quoting from the cuneiform account of the flood, "The gods sucked in the scent, the gods sucked in the well-smelling scent; the gods gathered like flies over the sacrificer," adds that the scriptural expression is also anthropomorphic, but more worthy of God, who accepts with favour the thankfulness of the rescued, manifested in the heavenward streaming sacrifices.¹ In Phil. iv. 18, the apostle makes use of the same figure to describe the acceptableness before God of true consistent Christian conduct.

This description of the manner in which Christ showed His love, and the statement of the Father's acceptance of it as indicating its perfection, are introduced here in order to make the believers addressed feel how serious the task is to which they set themselves as imitators of God after the pattern of Christ.

(3) *Personal Holiness* (chap. v. 3-21).

Vers. 3-21.—Having shown the principle of the new life in regeneration (iv. 17-24), and having enlarged upon those faults which appear in the relations of men to one another, and are inconsistent with the new gracious nature (iv. 25, v. 2), the apostle now proceeds to enumerate and condemn those faults of the personal life, as affecting personal holiness (v. 3-21).

Ver. 3. *But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you.*—That the apostle should begin his warnings against faults of personal conduct by the mention of fornication (*πορνεία*), is not to be wondered at, when we recall the state of matters in the Corinthian church (1 Cor.

¹ Delitzsch, *New Commentary on Genesis*, i. 281, 1888.

vi. 13–18), where evidently such sins of impurity were by some classed with necessary operations of the physical being of men, such as eating of meats. It is just because paganism had taught them to think lightly of this, and similar sins of the flesh, that Paul finds it necessary to make prominent how absolutely intolerable all such things are, and how certainly they must exclude the doers of them from the kingdom of God. Besides this special form of impurity, he proceeds to denounce *uncleanness* (ἀκαθαρσία), which includes impurities of all sorts. By this combination of the special and the general, the apostle makes his injunction at once pointed and comprehensive. These two terms are similarly combined, Gal. v. 19; Col. iii. 5; in the reverse order, 2 Cor. xii. 21; and in the same section, Rom. i. 29, 24; 1 Thess. iv. 3, 7. Together, they represent the whole class of fleshly sins of impurity. To them is joined another class of sins, under the general designation of *covetousness* (πλεονεξία), which in Col. iii. 5 is joined to those just named by καὶ, and not by ἢ, as here. The effect of the “or” in our text is not to attach what follows as explanatory of what precedes, but to distinguish it as a new class of offences. Jowett, in admitting that πλεονεξία may mean “lust” in Rom. i. 29, seems to assume that it does mean this in Eph. v. 3 and Col. iii. 5. This could only follow if we made “or” introduce an explanation of ἀκαθαρσία, which is too plain a word to require this; for indeed this would be explaining a word which must mean uncleanness, by a word which usually means covetousness, and only may possibly mean lust. It is much more natural to take it here, as in chap. iv. 19, to mean covetousness, greedy desire. In that passage, as we have seen, it is used to characterise the eager, selfish, grasping manner in which lust is gratified, regardless of the rights of others. The selfishness of man’s sin shows itself in impurity and covetousness (see Lightfoot on Col. iii. 5). From all this Paul would have Christians keep themselves absolutely separate. That these things might not be in their thoughts, he would have them not even mention their names. Here the contrast is thorough-going; what pagans tolerated the *doing of*, Christians must not tolerate the very *speaking of*. The word *ονομάζεσθαι*

seems to refer to things known by name, because not only existing but also actually present. Hence Chrysostom explains the phrase thus: "Let them not anywhere be so much as seen." If each member of the community puts things away, the very names by which, when present, they were known, will pass out of use and remembrance.

As becometh saints.—They are to live under a sense of the dignity of their calling. They are called to holiness; let them beware of doing anything inconsistent with their heavenly vocation. The title of "saints" makes prominent their relation to God. The apostle thus employs a term that brings out the peculiar unfitness of the slightest approach to impurity on the part of those who profess to be related to the God of holiness (comp. 1 Cor. vi. 15).

Ver. 4. *And shameful conduct, and foolish talking, or graceless wit.*—Here we have another threefold list, arranged and connected in a precisely similar way to the last, and included, like that list, under the injunction, "Let them not be once named among you." In reference to their connection with the vices before mentioned, they may be described as particular acts which have the tendency to produce those evil habits of life before condemned. *Shameful conduct* (*αἰσχρότης*) means any procedure or manner of life that is base and dishonourable. Its contextual position shows that it means here "filthiness," as the Authorised Version gives it. We do not meet the word elsewhere in Scripture. The *αἰσχρολογία* of Col. iii. 9 is shameful conduct, as shown in obscene or filthy speech. The foolish talking (*μωρολογία*) of our text is a somewhat wider term than the *αἰσχρολογία*, though, from its connection, probably meaning very much the same thing here. This term also occurs nowhere else in Scripture.¹ It applies to all talk that is not seasoned with grace, whether it be merely idle or positively filthy. The third term, which is also a *hapax legomenon*, is connected with the second by "or," inasmuch as both are sins of the tongue. Thus we have, on the one hand, shameful conduct, and, on the other, shameful talk,

¹ Dr. Field, *Otium Norvicense*, pt. iii., pp. 1-3, has shown that *μωρίς* in Matt. v. 22 is the Greek *μωρός*, "a fool," and not, as Stanley had suggested, a Hebrew or Syriac word meaning "rebel."

whether it be of the silly or of the highly-polished kind. The difference between *μωρολογία* or *εὐτραπεία* seems to be that between rudeness and refinement in the presentation of the same thing. The "jesting" is probably here graceless wit, commonly ill-natured, with a sting in it, and generally carrying with it some corrupting innuendo, which serves directly to connect it with that impurity of speech condemned in the preceding phrase. Aristotle, *Rhet.* ii, 12, as quoted by Trench, *Synonyms of New Testament*, defines *εὐτραπεία* as *πεπαιδευμένη ὕβρις*, which Sir Alexander Grant, with reference to its cultured, polished form, happily renders "chastened insolence."¹ These two words together bring under one condemnation all lightness, which indicates an inability to realise the seriousness and solemnity of life, and all mockery of goodness, which reveals a diabolical hatred of the good.

Which are not becoming.—The correct reading, as adopted by Tischendorf and Westcott and Hort, is ἡ οὐκ ἀνῆκεν. The imperfect - indicative, which is scarcely translateable in English, means *ut oportebat*, which was not becoming, and continues to be unbecoming. See Winer, *Grammar*, p. 338. It presents the complete antithesis to "as becometh saints" of the previous verse. They are not, as the pagan world supposed, *adiaphora*, indifferent and harmless modes of entertaining one's self, but sins which disgrace and dishonour those who practise them. Further, these words seem intended to characterise the whole group of vices, and not the two last only.

But rather giving of thanks.—This *εὐχαριστία* is what

¹ It is one of those words which has passed from high respectability to infamy. In respect of its bitterness, Chrysostom says: "The man who plays the jester (*εὐτραπελεύμενος*) must of necessity incur the signal hatred of the objects of his random ridicule, whether they be present, or absent and hear of it. If the thing is creditable, why is it left to mountebanks? . . . Far be it from a generous, far be it from a high-born soul, aye, far too even from slaves." Trench, *Synonyms of New Testament*, p. 124, refers to the profligate old man in Plautus, *Miles Gloriosus*, iii. 1, 42-45, as illustrating precisely the character of the *εὐτράπελος*, and calls attention to the fact that this character says of himself, as explaining his profligate wit: *Post Ephesi sum natus*. Also P. Volumninus, friend of Cicero, as a notable wit and man of the world, bore the name "Eutrapelus." In the thought of Paul, as even among the writers of his age generally, the word was coming to mean wit wedded to the service of sin.

becometh saints, which, as such, should take the place of these condemned heathenish vices. In Col. ii. 7, iii. 15, iv. 2, the duty of thanksgiving is pressed, as Klöpffer thinks, upon those who were being misled into a sour, peevish asceticism; here upon those in danger of falling back into the dissolute ways of heathenism. The recollection of what they owe to God should save from both dangers. He who thanks God for His blessings cannot turn back to find his joy in that which lies under God's curse. Such thanksgiving, as the substitute of what is becoming for what is unbecoming, must flavour alike the conduct and the conversation. It is devout, sincere reflection on that God who has loved us, and on that Christ who has given Himself up for us. This is invariably Paul's ultimate counsel with regard to the displacement of evil in thought, or word, or deed. Let evil be replaced by good. Have thoughts of God, thoughts of His love and goodness, filling your hearts, and they will keep your hearts and lives from sin and shame.

Ver. 5. *For this ye are aware of, knowing.*—He assumes that he has now said enough on a point of which they cannot be ignorant. They are aware of this, viz. the incongruity between their Christian profession and the practice of those vices which he has been condemning. He does not need, therefore, to go further into the proof of his proposition. And he makes this assumption, because he is assured that they know what the penalty of continuance in the practice of such sins is. His reiteration is with a view of keeping this truth to the front amid all the temptations of life. He thus says to them in effect, “Ye know these things, see therefore that ye win the happiness which comes to those who do them.”

That no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous person, who is an idolater.—We have here given again these words as applied to persons guilty of sins, which correspond to the words just before used to describe those sins (πόρνος, ἀκάθαρτος, πλεονέκτης). The peculiar element here is the defining of the covetous man as an idolater (εἰδωλολάτρης). Also in Col. iii. 5, it is said of πλεονεξία: ἥτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρεία. Covetousness is mammon-worship (Matt. vi. 24). In his *Epistle to the Philippians*, § xi., Polycarp refers to Valens, a presbyter

who had fallen through avarice, and says, "If a man refrain not from covetousness, he shall be defiled by idolatry;" *si quis non se abstinnerit ab avaritia, ab idolatria coinquinabitur*. "Covetousness," says Chrysostom, "is idolatry and worse than idolatry. Idolaters worship the creatures of God; but thou art worshipping a creature of thine own. For God made not covetousness, but thine own insatiable appetite invented it. And look at the madness and folly. They that worship idols honour also the idols of worship; and if any one speak of them with disrespect or ridicule they stand up in their defence; whereas thou, as in a state of intoxication, art worshipping an object which is so far from being free from accusation, that it is even full of impiety. If even they are in the highest degree without excuse, yet art thou in a far higher, who art for ever censuring covetousness, and reviling those who devote themselves to it, and who serve and obey it."

Has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.—The kingdom here, as in 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, xv. 50; Gal. v. 21, is that of Christ as the Risen One. The expression *κληρονομίαν ἔχει*, though not elsewhere used by Paul, just like in the verb *κληρονομεῖν* in Galatians and 1 Corinthians is to be understood in allusion to the inheritance by Israel of the earthly Canaan, as foreshadowing the blessedness of the heavenly state. This kingdom is a condition of holiness into which enters nothing that defileth. Such evil courses as those named absolutely bar the way of entrance into that kingdom.—This characteristic of the kingdom, the absolute exclusion of everything defiling, is made yet more evident by the distinctive name given to it. It is the kingdom of Christ and God. A considerable discussion has been raised over this passage, as well as over Titus ii. 13; 2 Pet. i. 1, as to whether the name God is here applied to Christ or whether it refers to the Father. Apart from the dogmatic interest, the question has been discussed in connection with the grammatical principle of the use of the article. As the article is used only before Christ and not again before God (*τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ*), Middleton (*The Doctrine of the Greek Article*, 1808), supported by many distinguished scholars, maintained that Christ alone is here spoken of and described as God. The

discussion has been conducted mainly in connection with Titus ii. 13. See Winer, *Grammar*, p. 162; Fairbairn, *Pastoral Epistles*, pp. 282-285, 1874. The conclusion now generally acquiesced in is, that grammatically we may render such a passage as that before us, either "the kingdom of Christ and of God," or "the kingdom of Christ who is God." On the ground of the grammatical admissibility of the rendering "of Christ and of God," we must certainly receive this as by far the more natural interpretation. As thus understood, the stately and full designation of the kingdom in which inheritance is desired, is fitted very impressively and solemnly to indicate the impossibility of anything impure securing entrance. It is not merely the kingdom of Christ, in such a way that it can be separated in thought or reality from that of God. What the kingdom of God has ever been—the abode of holiness, which flesh and blood could not inherit—that also now, without any modification whatever, is the kingdom of Christ. This undoubtedly is the point emphasised here by the apostle. The influence of paganism was making itself felt in the young Christian Church, in the direction of lowering the conception of the holiness of the kingdom. Paul bids the Ephesians remember that Christ's kingdom is God's kingdom, and that no abatement in the requirement of absolute holiness has been or can be made. It is now called the kingdom of Christ, not to distinguish it from the kingdom of God, with which, on the contrary, it is identical, but to show that the only way of entrance into it is by and through Christ. In the use of the two names we have also here a solemn reference to the exhortation with which the chapter opens, where we are called to imitate God and to walk in love like Christ. It is Christ's love that opens for us God's kingdom, in which we can dwell only as imitators of Christ and God.¹

¹ It may seem strange that the apostle did not denounce such sins in much more vehement language, in respect of their shamefulness and of their injuriousness to society, instead of confining himself to the one point of their distinctive influence upon the spiritual life of the transgressor. But we must remember that he had no public opinion against those sins to which he could appeal. He must first create this by producing, by religious means and on religious foundations, a purer morality. It is only a religious code of morals that will supply

Ver. 6. *Let no one deceive you with vain words.*—From the context it is evident that the apostle had in view a particular form of deceit that was being practised with ruinous effect among the young Christian communities. Apologists for vice were found everywhere, who represented the excesses of paganism as matters of indifference, or even as necessities of man's nature, the suppression of which would be a reflection upon the Creator. He warns the Ephesians against such sophistries.¹ Such words are *empty*, devoid of truth. Those speaking them would be unconverted heathens, against whom the Gentile converts are now warned. The word deceive (*ἀπατᾶν*) refers us back to the deceit of chap. iv. 22 (*ἀπατή*), and reminds us that as the lusts are *lusts of deceit*, so those who say that they are of no consequence are *deceivers*.

For on account of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.—"These things," according to the analogy of Col. iii. 6, are not the "vain words," but the vices condemned in the previous verses. This was just what those vain words denied, and what those deceived by vain words would be kept ignorant of to their undoing. In spite of all such miserable sophistries, God is angry with the wicked every day, and the wicked are not being allowed to pass unpunished. "These things" are not and never can be indifferent in His sight.—What "these things" call forth is described as "*the wrath of God.*" This does not mean merely the punishments of sin in this world, though certainly those are included, and, as elements in that wrath, even suggested by the use of the verb "comes" in the present. It is the coming wrath that now is and will be yet more fiercely revealed against all who are not delivered from it by the Saviour (1 Thess. i. 10). There is just the alternative—having inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God, or

a basis for the prohibition and suppression of such sins. See Jowett, *Epistles of Paul*, i. 86-89, 1859, "Evils of the Apostolic Age," in which he describes admirably Paul's mode of dealing with the sin of licentiousness.

¹ With reference to a similar warning in 1 Cor. vi. 9, Godet in his *Commentary*, i. 303, 1886, says: "It is perfectly obvious that some at Corinth were indulging in strange illusions as to the consequences of salvation by grace, and even went the length of putting the practice of vice under the patronage of the principle of Christian liberty."

exposure to the wrath of God.—Those who are exposed to the wrath of God are described as “*the children of disobedience*” (υἱοὶ τῆς ἀπειθείας). Those who experience God’s wrath, according to Rom. ii. 8, are they who obey not the truth but obey unrighteousness. They are rebels against God’s holy law. The precise form of the designation may fairly be pressed. Disobedience is, as it were, personified, and those who do such things as those before named are regarded as His sons.

Ver. 7. *Become not then partakers with them.*—The form of this exhortation, beginning with γίνεσθε, attaches it to the exhortations of chap. iv. 32 and v. 1; the contents of it, by way of contrast, with the exhortations to the imitation of God, Christ, and the saints in chap. iv. 32, v. 2, 3.¹ If we pursue the imitation of God, Christ, and the saints, we shall thus, and only thus, escape being reckoned among “the children of disobedience” (comp. 1 Cor. v. 9–11; 2 Cor. vi. 14). The thought that listening to the vain words of those deceivers would lead away from such fellowship, should make us pause. We have already met the word partaker (συμμέτοχος) in chap. iii. 6, the only other passage in Scripture in which the word is used. It implies a close confederacy, with community of aims, and not that unavoidable social intercourse which even the apostle himself admits (1 Cor. v. 9) we must have with fornicators of the world, unless we would leave the world altogether. Fellowship in conduct, or any toleration of their evil ways, is strictly forbidden (comp. ver. 11).

Ver. 8. *For ye were formerly darkness.*—We have here the reason why there should be no partaking with the children of disobedience. That would be a falling back upon the position which they occupied before they had been regenerated.—The figurative expression (σκότος) is now used to describe their unregenerate life of disobedience. This was not merely the element in which they lived, but it penetrated their being, and characterised it; so that they were not merely in darkness, but they were darkness. The understanding and heart being dark, they were ignorant of the truth of God, and under the influence of the lusts of deceit. They must see to it that all this has been left behind.

¹ Compare Von Soden, p. 140.

But now are ye light in the Lord.—What they were they were in themselves, but what they are they are in the Lord. He is the light of the world, the light and the life of men. It is in Him that they become radiant. The light has shined into their hearts, and they are not merely enlightened, but the very substance of light has penetrated their being, so that they have become light. “Everything outside of Christ,” says Calvin, “is held by Satan.”

Walk as children of light.—That which is the inner principle of the life must show itself in the outward conduct. Show what you are, and that you are not what you were. Christ commands us to let our light shine for God’s glory (Matt. v. 16); here it is in order that we may not be ranked among the children of disobedience upon whom God’s wrath is coming. The best commentary on this walking in the light is 1 John i. 5-7, ii. 8-11.

Ver. 9. *For the fruit of the light.*—The light ripens the fruit, and brings it to perfection. The light of grace, by its shining, causes the springing and ripening of very precious fruit. If ye do not walk as children of light, then the light will be fruitless. There will be no evidence of its presence or apology for its existence. In Gal. v. 22 we read “the fruit of the Spirit,” which led to the substitution of “spirit” for “light” in the common text of our passage.

Consists in all kinds of goodness and righteousness and truth.—These are indeed the fruits of the Spirit, for His grace is the light under which they have grown and ripened.—*Ἀγαθωσύνη* is not active goodness or benevolence, as Light-foot defines it, nor is it exactly goodness or probity, as Jowett puts it. It is integrity of heart and disposition, the right relation and proportion of the parts of one’s own inner being (2 Thess. i. 11; Gal. v. 22). This goodness or integrity of nature shows itself in just and righteous treatment of others, *δικαιοσύνη*, as in chap. iv. 24. Then to such a one, upright in heart and just in conduct, it will be a necessity of his being “to speak the truth in love” (iv. 15). If we are light in the Lord, then these fruits which appear in Him will be brought forth, under His light, in us.

Ver. 10. *Proving what is well-pleasing to the Lord.*—This

verse connects immediately with ver. 8. When ye walk as children of light, then ye shall be able rightly to judge what in each particular would be well-pleasing to the Lord. So walk that ye may know God's will. It is the renewed will alone that can exercise discrimination, so as to discern what is well-pleasing (*εὐάρεστον*) to God (comp. Rom. xii. 2). This is the great moral task of the Christian in this world. He that walks in the Lord does what is well-pleasing to the Lord.

Ver. 11. *And have no share in the unfruitful works of darkness.*—The verb *συγκοινωνεῖν* here, as in Phil. iv. 14, means to become partners with others in doing something. The apostle warns Christians against conniving with unbelievers in doing what belongs to the unregenerate state, and ought therefore to be among the believer's former things. These evil deeds are here designated by way of contrast to the fruits of light. As in Gal. v. 19, 22, the products of the flesh, or darkness, are styled *works*, because darkness does not bring forth fruit, and only the products of the Spirit or light are styled fruits; so also here we have the "works" not the "fruits" of darkness. These works are "unfruitful," *ἄκαρπα*. The word is used by Paul in 1 Cor. xiv. 14, where the understanding of him who speaks with tongues is said to be unfruitful, producing nothing for the benefit of others. In our text the word seems too mild, and so it has been corrected into *ἀκαθάρτος* (unclean) and *ἀτάκτος* (disorderly). It affords, however, the real contrast to the fruit-producing influences of the light. This is all that is needed here. Elsewhere (Rom. vi. 21, 23, vii. 5), the apostle describes the works of darkness as fruit of which those who had wrought them are ashamed, and as having their end in death. They are not in themselves without fruit, but only in respect of securing inheritance in the kingdom of God. Compare Klöpper, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, p. 165.

But rather protest against them.—Not only avoid taking part in such proceedings, but positively express your disapproval, and bring them to the light that they may be judged and condemned. This will be best done by setting up over against them that course of conduct which stands the test as

well-pleasing to Christ, and seeking to have this standard accepted by others so that it may come to be generally applied. The word ἐλέγχειν is used before by Paul only once, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, and there in precisely the same way as here (comp. John iii. 20). This exposing is with a view to the bringing into the light those who had been in darkness.

Ver. 12. *For the things done by them in secret*¹ *it is shameful even to speak of.*—This gives the reason why we must expose and denounce the deeds of darkness, so as to free ourselves of all suspicion of complicity in them. Yet it shows how delicate the task of such exposure is. Our denunciation of them must keep in view their foulness, and make us careful lest we extend a knowledge of infamous proceedings that may have a demoralising influence on those who hear. In this verse, coupled with the preceding, the apostle sets before us the two sides of a difficult problem, which has considerably exercised the public mind in our own day. On the one hand, the Christian fails in his duty if he allows vicious practices, of which he has come to know, to be continued without protest on his part and active opposition, even to the extent of public action and prosecution, if by these means it may be possible to stamp out a moral pestilence. Then, on the other hand, he must be careful not to advertise infamous vice by bringing it under the notice of those who may be influenced unfavourably by it. The frivolous or scurrilous depicting of vice, such as we have in the Roman poets, even in the Satirists, and in much of the so-called realistic fiction and dramatic writing of our own times, neglects the caution of our text. There is no doubt that many viciously inclined persons have made a false use of this counsel of caution. They have emphasised the shamefulfulness of the mention of these things, though they regard not the shamefulfulness of their practice so long as that can be kept secret. According to the apostle's view, which is the common sense of all true morality, the shamefulfulness of these things must be arrested at all hazards. The shamefulfulness of the mention of them serves only to bring into view the unspeak-

¹ The adverb κρυφῶς is used only here in the New Testament, but is quite equivalent to the κρυπτά of 1 Cor. iv. 5 ; 2 Cor. iv. 2.

able shamefulness of the doing of them, and warns against incurring the guilt that any measure of connivance with the doers of them must necessarily involve. Consider, also, how the thought of the condition of such offenders, doing things shameful even to name, should affect the Christian so as to make him, for the sake of his fellow-men, ready to show up the evil, and, if possible, convince the sinner of his sin. "So that the necessity of the rebuke is founded on the magnitude of the offences. The magnitude of the sin is meant to move pity in the hearts of the faithful, and *that* is to incite them to save the lost ones" (Olshausen). At the same time, from the apostle's special point of view, what really forms the determining motive of the exhortation is the spiritual life of the believers addressed. Paul writes to convince them that any connivance with such shameful doings must sap the very foundations of their own life, and endanger, as nothing else could do, their obtaining of the inheritance.

Ver. 13. *But all things that are protested against are made manifest by the light.*—The prominent idea here is the manifestation of those things committed in secret. If those secret vices be subjected to scrutiny, not in a frivolous way, nor for the gratification of a prurient curiosity, but under the light, then what was concealed is made manifest. The light which thus manifests is the grace that shows itself in those who are light in the Lord. Under the light of their consistent conduct and their maintenance of principles that admit of no acquiescence in or compromise with the secret deeds of shame, nor with any of the works of darkness, the horridness and shamefulness of those secret vices of heathenism are made manifest. They can no longer be winked at, or regarded as things that can on any account be tolerated. When placed under the light of Christian truth and knowledge, they are seen to be what they are. They are now brought into full consciousness; they are brought within the range of conscience. It is something gained when the works of the flesh are become manifest (Gal. v. 19). But observe, it is emphatically said that it is *the light* that does this. No such manifestation of shameful things is possible on the part

of those who are in darkness, and who therefore can treat these matters only frivolously or scurrilously.

For everything which is made manifest is light.—The verb *φανεροῦσθαι* is here passive, and not middle. We cannot translate, as Authorised Version, what makes manifest, but what is made manifest. Hence we must join this clause, not to the immediately previous one, but to the *μᾶλλον δὲ ἐλέγχετε* of ver. 11. It is the natural property of light to diffuse itself. It belongs to light to impart visibility. What is shone upon is seen. Whatever is *φανερούμενον*, therefore, is no longer in *σκότος*, not among things done *κρυφῇ*. That light is there which affords the knowledge of good and evil, and the ability to distinguish the two. While enveloped in a mask, so that they seemed not what they were, these evil practices were unchecked, but now light has been flashed upon them, and they stand condemned in the light. The doers of these things, after this exposure, may continue to do them, but they will then be sinning against light.

Ver. 14. *Wherefore he saith.*—This quotation formula (*διὸ λέγει*) is precisely the same as that used in chap. iv. 8. The *διὸ* points back to the urgent need that exists for bringing into light those hidden evils, flashing upon them the light of gospel truth. That the phrase here used is intended as a formula of quotation, ought to be beyond dispute. But we may see at once, from the connection, that nothing will depend upon the literal exactness of the quotation. It is only an illustrative reference that is required, and not the proof of any statement that has been made. The apostle simply wishes to impress upon Christians the duty of letting their light shine, by referring to an Old Testament passage in which the duty is enforced. He can, therefore, deal freely with the language by accommodating it to the times and circumstances of the new dispensation under which he writes. As himself an inspired prophet, he reproduces freely, in terms of the Christian revelation, what, under the inspiration of God, had been said before. As to the original of this quotation, Von Soden thinks that it cannot possibly be found in Ps. xlv. 24; Isa. xxvi. 19, li. 7, lx. 1. These, he thinks, may have supplied the inspiration to some Christian poet,

who produced what the apostle here quotes as a solemn formula or hymn, used possibly in the Christian service after baptism, and quoted as scripture because taken from some apocryphal book or apocalypse. It does seem strange that the apostle should take a passage familiar to his readers, from its liturgical use, as an exhortation to Christians, and apply it, as the context of our passage requires, to the children of disobedience. Its suitableness for the apostle's purpose is quite apparent; but if the theory of its place in a Christian liturgy were correct, its use would not seem happy or appropriate to those who were familiar with it in that other connection. As belonging to an apocryphal book, it would not have been quoted by Paul as scripture, unless we suppose, with Meyer, a lapse of memory on the part of the apostle. Even the theory of a Christian hymn, suggested by Origen, and, according to Theodore, Theodoret, and Severianus, entertained by many of the ancients, must be rejected as admitting of no justification for the use of the formula that could have been used only to introduce a quotation from a canonical book. The only legitimate hypothesis seems to be that already hinted at. The apostle, with his mind steeped in Old Testament modes of expression, had before him such passages as those above named. Especially the words of Isa. lx. 1 are in his memory; but these suggest to him, not the language, but only the general tone of the impassioned appeal, which, as the first and chief of Christian missionaries, he addresses to the masses of the Gentile world, morally dead, yet capable of being stirred up into a new and glorious spiritual life. The thought common to the old and to the new versions of the appeal is the gospel truth, that *the light* has come.

Up, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead.—Here we have a specimen of a protest and rousing shout (ἐλεγχος), such as he would have those who are light in the Lord address to the children of disobedience. It is evidently these last who are addressed here, and not believers, for they have already risen with Christ (chap. ii. 6). On the contrary, those addressed are still in the sleep of sin (1 Thess. v. 6), and spiritually dead (chap. ii. 1, 5). The absence of light is implied by

sleep, which is befitting the night, and by death, which exists in the absence of life-giving light.

And Christ shall shine upon thee.—Instead of *shine upon thee* (ἐπιφαύσει σοι), which does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, some ancient copies read, *touch thee* (ἐπιψαύσει σοι). This latter reading was known to Chrysostom, Theodore, Jerome, and other ancient writers, who rightly rejected it. Jerome accounts for its origin by the tradition that the words were addressed to Adam, whose body, lying under the cross of Christ, was restored to life by the touch of the Lord's body and blood.¹ He who is shone upon by Christ is not merely enlightened, but is, in the full sense, made light itself. "The sleeper has no sensibility of the light till he awakes, nor has the eternal soul in man any sensibility of Christ till he wakes and rises from his state of death. . . . God would not mock man by bidding him to 'awake' out of death, and to arise to a new life, if the awakener were not in the very midst of his soul to help him. God calls man from within himself. The resurrection and the life stirs in him, saying, 'Arise from the dead!' and the man is already at the dawn of the heavenly life. As sunrise pricks the sleeper, and says to him, Arise! even so the hour cometh when the dead soul hears the voice of the Son of man, and hearing lives" (Pulsford). This is truly a blessed message of life, which the children of light are commissioned to deliver to the dark dead world, on behalf of Him who is the Light of the world.

Ver. 15. *Consider carefully, then, how ye walk.*—The adverb ἀκριβῶς means accurately, exactly. Here the apostle says, "Your conduct is a matter of extreme importance, calling for your most earnest and unflagging attention." The conjunctive then, οὖν, refers back to the scope of the whole paragraph about children of light. Seeing that, as such, your responsi-

¹ Jerome gives the words of a preacher who offered this explanation of the text with the reading referred to:—"Surge Adam qui dormis, et exsurge a mortuis, et non ut legimus ἐπιφαύσει σοι Χριστός, id est, orietur tibi Christus, sed ἐπιψαύσει, id est, continget te Christus, quia videlicet tactu sanguinis ipsius et corporis dependentis vivificetur atque consurgat." Chrysostom, on John xix. 17, also mentions the tradition. See Chase, *Chrysostom: A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 84, 85, 1887; also, Swete's edition of Theodore of Mopsuestia's *Minor Epistles of Paul*, i. 180, note, 1880.

bilities toward the children of disobedience are so serious, walk, direct your lives, under a solemn sense of these responsibilities.

Not as unwise, but as wise.—The addition of this characterisation of the walk comes in more naturally when we adopt the reading of the last clause given above, ἀκριβῶς πῶς, in preference to πῶς ἀκριβῶς, which would make ἀκριβῶς a qualification, not of the considering but of the walk. It would not be natural, after defining the walk as punctilious, exact, to insist that it should be conducted, not unwisely but wisely. The word “unwise” (ἄσοφος) is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. The passage is an amplification of the ἐν σοφίᾳ περιπατεῖτε of Col. iv. 5. Those would show themselves *unwise*, who would arouse needless opposition against themselves and the truth, by the violence and recklessness of their onslaught upon the children of darkness. Those would show themselves *wise*, who, while unflinchingly maintaining the truth and carefully guarding against all complicity with sin, would so reprove as to disarm opposition, and win for Christ and for God those who had been the children of disobedience. This is the application of these terms which the Colossian passage would naturally suggest. Apart from this, with reference to the preceding context, the *unwise* would be those who allowed themselves to be deceived by empty words, ver. 6; and the *wise*, those who protested against the secret deeds of vice, ver. 11.

Ver. 16. *Making a wise use of the time.*—These words are identical with those of Col. iv. 5, and are introduced there, as here, in immediate connection with an exhortation to walk wisely toward those without. The phrase ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν is a very obscure one. The verb ἐξαγοράζω means to redeem, buy off; also to buy up; and ἐξαγοράζειν καιρὸν (Dan. ii. 8), to gain time or delay. Our phrase seems to mean, “making the most of the time at our disposal.”

Because the days are evil.—This assigns a special reason for making a diligent use of our time and opportunity. The character of the time is such as to present peculiar difficulties and occasion sore trouble to believers. Abounding wicked-

ness calls for special diligence and zeal, and the careful use of every precious moment on the part of Christians. Evil days call for wise walking; they allow of no time for vain words or unfruitful works. They make it specially necessary that Christians look *accurately* (ἀκριβῶς) to their walk. The danger of Christians, in times of abounding wickedness, against which they must guard themselves by vigorous occupation, is that their love to God and Christ should grow cold (Matt. xxiv. 12). An almost exact parallel to our text is found in Sirach iv. 20: "Observe the opportunity and beware of evil (συντήρησον καιρὸν καὶ φύλαξαι ἀπὸ πονηροῦ)." The word πονηρός is derived from πόνος, "toil," in the passive sense of causing trouble to others. If, *e.g.* farming operations were thought of as, under the curse, a toil, γῆ πονηρά would mean "soil requiring immoderate labour, *i.e.* worthless soil" (Chase, "The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church," in *Texts and Studies*, I. iii. 90, Camb. 1891). The word thus came to mean intrinsic and irredeemable badness. This is quite reconcilable with the view of Dr. Hatch (*Essays on Biblical Greek*, pp. 77-79, 1889), that the word means not so much passive badness as active harmfulness or mischief. The being in whom the exercise of such a spirit and the practice of such acts have become habitual, has surely developed into a wicked and malicious being, so that when ὁ πονηρός comes to be employed as a personal designation, it is applied to the devil, as the concentration of all inherent wickedness and malice. See chap. vi. 16.

Ver. 17. *For this cause show not yourselves senseless.*—The reference here evidently is to the exhortation to maintain a wise and consistent course of conduct, such as is described in the two preceding verses. The reference certainly includes the closing statement of the last verse, though it should not be regarded as having it exclusively in view. He had said, "Be not unwise, but wise." And now he says, "Ye will certainly show yourselves unwise, if you do not use your intelligence aright." The word ἄφρων means senseless or stupid—a much stronger word than ἄσοφος. It does not mean "without mind," but the conduct of one who has a mind and does not use it, or uses it in a wrong way. So the man that has been misusing his

reason in arguing against the resurrection by advancing silly and inconsiderate objections, is called by Paul ἄφρων (1 Cor. xv. 36). The intention of the apostle in our text seems to be to warn against such sophistical and captious exercise of wit and reasoning, as might be used to obscure the fact of the indispensable and supreme necessity for maintaining a faultless walk and conversation on the part of all who believe in Christ. Any one who reasons thus is not φρόνιμος but ἄφρων.

But understand what the will of the Lord is.—The will of Christ is that which is according to His will (comp. Rom. xii. 2.) This we are to understand by having practical experience of it, conforming our lives and guiding our practice by it. It was already described in ver. 10 as that which is well-pleasing to the Lord. The will of the Lord is the law of the Christian life, which has taken the place of the Mosaic law. Paul declared himself (1 Cor. ix. 21) under law to Christ. It is the primary duty of the Christian to inform himself what the will of the Lord is. This is what he must exercise his understanding upon. If he does not do this he is ἄφρων. The word “understanding” here is the imperative of *συνιέναι*, answering to the *γίνεσθε* of the previous clause, and meaning “give attention to,” “put things together and weigh their import so as to reach a conclusion.” Thus to know the will of the Lord, in regard to the various details and circumstances of life, we must exercise our moral judgment upon its requirements. We must show ourselves φρόνιμοι and σοφοί, in order to bring ourselves into accord with the divine mind. It is a matter that calls for the exercise of our critical faculty. We must take life seriously, and give our mind to estimating the significance of each several act by bringing it into the light, and considering how it agrees with what we have learned to regard as the will of the Lord. According as we seriously engage in such investigations shall we become expert in understanding the Lord’s will.

Ver. 18. *And make not yourselves drunk with wine.*—Here the apostle adduces a particular vice which characteristically produces senselessness and obscures the understanding. To understand the Lord’s will we must have our senses and

powers of moral and spiritual discernment clear and active. Those vices already referred to are evidently calculated to dull and stupefy the moral sense; but even if we perceive this and avoid these, here is another vice, that of drunkenness, which is no less inimical to the maintaining of a consistent Christian walk. The man who makes himself drunk makes himself *ἄφρων*. Apart from the question of its inherent sinfulness, drunkenness will have the effect of preventing those who indulge in it from discovering the Lord's will in reference to the detailed circumstances of life.

In which there is prodigality.—"In which" refers not simply to "wine," but to "making one's self drunk with wine." Drunkenness is prodigality (*ἀσωτία*). The rendering of the Authorised Version, "excess," is perhaps not quite sufficiently strong, but indicates the sense correctly. The word *ἀσωτία* is derived from the verb *σώζειν*, with the negative particle. According as it is taken in an active or a passive sense, it will mean reckless extravagance, the conduct of a spendthrift who does not save, or the condition of one who is past redemption, who cannot be saved. The former meaning is most natural and appropriate here. The Vulgate renders it by *luxuria*; and Chrysostom paraphrases it by saying "that drunkenness not only does not preserve but destroys." Such indulgence is the result of a recklessness of spirit which overthrows the balance of reason, and, by obscuring our perception of the Lord's will, opens the door to all other forms of vice.

But be filled with the Spirit.—This indicates the only means whereby a true understanding of the will of the Lord is possible. The apostle has not been denouncing all sorts of excitement, but only false excitement. He does not condemn enthusiasm, but he bids his readers make sure that their enthusiasm arises from the proper source. Some of the earliest heretics, even those of the apostolic age, seem to have encouraged bacchanalian orgies, and simulated religious fervour among their fellows by drunken excitement. Now the apostle says, "By all means get thoroughly aroused, conduct yourselves like those that are possessed, but see to it that the influence constraining you is that of the Holy Spirit." The

contrast between this and the former clause lies in this, that while in both cases there is excitement, in the one case it is *intoxication*, and in the other it is *inspiration*.—The ἐν πνεύματι of our text should certainly be rendered “with the Spirit,” as the Spirit is both instrument and content of the filling, which sufficiently explains the use of ἐν. The rendering of Beck, “Secure to yourself fulness in the Spirit as the source of power and joy,” with a reference to an interpretation of chap. iv. 23, which we have seen cause to reject, is not grammatically necessary. Still more objectionable is the suggestion of the margin of the Revised Version, “Be filled in spirit.” These renderings destroy utterly the evidently intended opposition of the two clauses of our verse. The contrast is really between the stimulation of much wine and the stimulation of a large measure of the Spirit. There is a filling with wine in the one verse, and a filling with the Spirit in the other. How superficial observers might mistake the one for the other, is shown by Acts ii. 15. As in that case Peter reproves the mocking, cynical spirit that puts the worst construction on what appears, here Paul warns Christians against giving occasion for such a charge.

Ver. 19. *Speaking to one another*.—What intoxication would prevent, inspiration would further, viz. mutual intercourse by means of articulate speech for the purpose of spiritual edification. The single term “speaking” (λαλοῦντες) represents the two words “teaching” and “admonishing” (διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες) of Col. iii. 16, not as Von Soden suggests, because meanwhile the teaching office had assumed a distinct place of its own, but because in Colossians the statement is introduced in immediate connection with the indwelling word of Christ which imparts wisdom, whereas here it is introduced in connection with the stimulating, impulsive influence of the Spirit. We have to think here of a thrill and rush of enthusiasm, rather than of a calm, didactic, and hortatory service. The spiritual excitement and fervour which is here presupposed determines the form which this speaking takes. This “speaking to one another” (ἐαυτοῖς) indicates responsive or antiphonal singing. Further, there is no exclusive reference here to regular and formal exercises of public

worship, though, on the other hand, there is no reason to exclude these.

In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.—It seemed natural for those under the supreme control of spiritual impulses to express themselves in the richest forms of human speech, either in the ancient psalms in which saints of many generations had found fit utterance to those glowing thoughts and feelings of the Church, or in the improvised effusions in which their own surcharged feelings sought vent. The three words used here may not perhaps be intended to indicate carefully marked-off *kinds* of composition. It is, however, too much to say that we are to see no distinction, but simply a multiplication of synonymous terms. In combination these three terms cover the whole range of expressive Christian praise. We cannot for a moment suppose that there is any suggestion of a collection of pieces for use in the public gatherings of Christians, an idea which could only occur to one who was finding difficulty in obtaining support for his thesis of post-apostolic authorship.—In addition to those passages in which mention is made of the Book of Psalms, the word “psalm” is used three times in the New Testament (1 Cor. xiv. 26; Col. iii. 16; Eph. v. 19), these last two being parallel and equivalent passages. In 1 Cor. xiv. 26, it seems to be used of an original improvised composition, in which the inspired gives expression to his spiritual experiences. With this meaning, in the only other New Testament instance of the use of the word, it would be hazardous to assume that in Colossians and Ephesians the reference is to Old Testament Psalms. Equally hazardous would it be to exclude reference to these. The most reasonable conclusion seems to be that the apostle here means sacred poetical compositions, whether old or new, of a style similar to the Old Testament Psalms. It is certainly a very curious reason that Trench, who would give the same restricted meaning even to the passage in Corinthians, urges for his belief that the *ψαλμοί* of our text are strictly the Old Testament Psalms, “*above all*, seeing that the word seems limited and restricted to its narrowest use by the nearly synonymous words with which it is grouped” (*Synonyms of New Testament*, § lxxviii.). Perhaps the close

conjunction of "doctrine" and "psalm" in 1 Cor. xiv. 26 may give ground for a surmise that the psalm was more distinctly doctrinal than the other compositions, and that in it, whether old or new, the Christian prophet conveyed some special revelation of truth.—"Hymns" (*ὕμνοι*) "were poetical addresses of thanksgiving and praise to God; *qui fortitudinem et majestatem prædicant Dei, et ejusdem semper vel benefica, vel facta, mirantur*" (Jerome). So too Augustine (*Enarr.* in Ps. lxxii. 1) indicates three indispensable elements in a hymn: "It must be praise, the praise of God, and it must be sung." Many, *e.g.* Lightfoot, Trench, etc., point to Eph. v. 14 as a specimen of an early Christian hymn. As we have seen, this theory has difficulties in the way of its acceptance that have not been overcome. Possibly 1 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Tim. ii. 11–14, may be quotations from such hymns. The songs of Zacharias and Mary are scarcely to be reckoned in this class. In the New Testament the word only occurs here and in Col. iii. 16; but the verb *ὑμνέω*, to sing a hymn, is found in Acts xvi. 25 and Heb. ii. 12, as also in Matt. xxvi. 30 and Mark xiv. 26, where it refers to the use of Old Testament Psalms. The *carmen* sung by the early Christians to Christ as God (Pliny, *Epistle*, x. 97) was certainly such a hymn, fulfilling literally the requirements of Augustine's definition.—"Songs" (*ὥδαί*) were poetical compositions not conforming to that strict definition. They are distinguished from odes generally, which might be of the most varied character and fitted for the most diverse occasions, by the epithet "spiritual" (*πνευματικαί*), not as inspired compositions, but as the work of spiritual men. We may take the word as indicating songs of a spiritual and edifying character of all descriptions, such as might not fall under the strict category of psalms or hymns, *e.g.* poetical descriptions of personal experiences, etc. It is wrong to say that they might be spoken rather than sung. Trench from this point of view has endeavoured to distinguish them from hymns by means of a reference to many of the poems in the *Christian Year*, and such-like volumes of sacred poetry, which are not adapted for singing, but rather for devotional reading and reflection. Elsewhere in the New Testament the word occurs in Rev. v. 9, xiv. 3, xv. 3. In

these three passages they are distinctly songs of praise sung by the redeemed to Christ. Upon the whole, we regard psalms and hymns as capable of being fairly differentiated. Then the apostle adds, "spiritual songs," as though he said, "And if under the influence of the Spirit you be led to express yourselves in any other way, let free scope by all means be given to the promptings of the Spirit."

Singing and playing in your heart to the Lord.—These words indicate a qualifying condition, or more particular definition of that exuberance of spirits, or excitement of feeling, which may legitimately be expressed by the Christian brethren. As, on the one hand, it is not to be induced by such stimulation as is used in bacchanalian orgies and such-like, so neither, on the other hand, is it to be produced by any false or forced excitation of nerves and emotions. It must not be merely a contagious spasm of religious fervour, created or quickened by the singing of sentimental songs by one in such a way as to challenge the answering by another in yet more ecstatic utterances. It must, in short, be seen to that there is no put-on or sham. This responsive singing must be rendered by those who have had and who have the spirit of melody and praise within their hearts. The two words "singing" (*ᾄδειν*) and "playing" (*ψάλλειν*), indicate the different forms which a thankful praising spirit may assume. They are terms that naturally apply to outward vocal expressions, the former being the word from which *ὠδή*, "song," is derived, and the latter that from which *ψαλμός*, "psalm," is derived. But here they signify the deep inward condition of spirit which finds expression in these ways. If we are to sing and play to the Lord with voice and finger, we must first sing and play to the Lord in the heart (*τῇ καρδίᾳ*). The addition of this clause may also afford comfort to those who have not the gift of song, and who cannot give expression to their feelings in intense spirit-stirring phrases. If their silence does not arise from indifference, nor yet from reluctance for any reason to confess their Lord, he will hear and accept the silent singing of the heart.

"God's Spirit in the renewed heart is a secret, intense joy. The origin of song is divine. The songs of hell and of the

wicked are but disgusting caricatures. The devil encourages his children to cloak their misery by an affectation of mirth. The unchaste and the intemperate drink of the delirious spirit of the abyss, and sing their filthy songs one to another. The children of God drink into them the Holy Spirit, and sing forth their heavenly delights. . . . From eternity to eternity the Spirit of God singeth the song of God. His song is an ever-changing variety of the infinite harmony and joy of the divine nature. The poetic utterances of all inspired psalmists and poets, and the compositions of inspired musicians, only record for us the vibrative effects produced on them by the song of God, the song of His being and purpose" (Pulsford).

Ver. 20. *Giving thanks always for all things*.—We have here a third clause, indicating, along with the two preceding ones, how the being filled with the Spirit manifests itself. There is also a noticeable broadening of the conception with each successive clause. Thanksgiving lies at the root of all acceptable praise. The presence of such a feeling in the soul fills the heart with melody, so that grace flows from the lips. This Spirit also is the one permanent and constant element. The actual exercise of praise in singing and playing, from its very nature, cannot be without intermission. But in an earlier epistle we are exhorted to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. v. 17), and here to give thanks *always* (πάντοτε). Amid all manner of occupations, which demand attention and prevent expression being formally given to the feelings and the heart in words, the spirit of prayer and of thanksgiving need not and should not be lost even for a moment. The *always* of the text is not a rhetorical exaggeration, but is to be understood literally and exactly. Then not only the *constancy* but also the *universality* of this exercise is emphasised: thanks always *for all things*. The words ὑπὲρ πάντων, just like πάντοτε, are to be taken in their full extent. Give thanks not merely for all blessings, but literally for all things. That is to say, just as we must maintain at all times the thankful spirit, so we must seek to cultivate it amid all the varieties of experience. What God sends should be accepted with thankfulness as the gift of His wisdom, whether in itself, apart from the thought of His giving, it would seem pleasing

or grievous. If our thanksgiving is to be *always*, it must necessarily be *for all things*. Evidently, if for anything we did not give thanks, we would not be giving thanks always. The *πάντοτε* and the *ὑπὲρ πάντων*, therefore, stand or fall together. The combination is a favourite formula with the apostle. Comp. 1 Thess. ii. 2; Col. i. 3; Phil. i. 3; 1 Cor. i. 4.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Here again we have the characteristic form of expression, so often met with in this epistle, which introduces, by the preposition “in,” an important clause indicating the sphere of operation or experience. It is not to be reduced to mean simply “to the honour of” Christ. Eadie has rightly enough said, “These thanks are rendered not ‘to the honour of His name,’ for the phrase is not *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*. To do anything ‘to the name,’ and to do it ‘in the name’ of another, are widely different.” But he is wrong when he distinguishes these meanings thus: The former implies honour and homage; the latter, authority and commission. It is no doubt a scriptural and a blessed truth that we have Christ’s authority in coming to God with our praises. But this does not convey, in its full extent, the idea of our text. According to the central thought and figure of the epistle, we who believe are “in Christ Jesus.” This is our permanent position. We are in Him always; and also all things are to us occasions for giving thanks, because of our relation to Him and our position in Him. Hence it is as we are in Him, identified with Him, bearing His name, that we can give thanks, and that we can do this as required always and for all things.

To God, even the Father.—Thanks thus given are ascribed to God as Father, first of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then, through Him, of all believers. He is the ultimate source of all grace (i. 3, iii. 21); and it is to Him, through Christ, that all prayer and praise must be offered.

In those three forms of expression we have ample vent afforded to that exuberance that arises from being filled with the Spirit. “Any one of them, taken separately, might possibly lead to extravagance. The social element might, by sympathy and contagion, prompt fanatical outcries and wild physical con-

vulsions. The secret devotion might become morbid, self-eating, and therefore self-destructive. And the fond idea of making all work worship, might end in there being no worship but work. But let the three unite and coalesce in one. This threefold sluice will suffice for any fulness. There is no danger of any excess here" (Candlish, *Discourses on Ephesians*, p. 252, 1875).

Ver. 21. *Submitting yourselves one to another.*—This must not be regarded as having the force of an imperative, but as a fourth participial clause subordinate to "be filled with the Spirit," and co-ordinate with the three immediately preceding clauses. In these three we have a description of the modes of expression to the fact that the soul is filled by the Holy Spirit, in so far as the direct relation of the soul to God is concerned. Here we have a description of the bearing of such a Spirit-filled soul toward those around. This bearing is described as one of mutual submission. How this suggested itself to the apostle in this connection is quite evident, if we go back again to ver. 18. The effect of excessive indulgence in the use of wine would be to produce proud swelling thoughts, and to cause each to entertain a quite exaggerated idea of his own individual importance. He had had very painful experience of this in the church of Corinth (1 Cor. xi. 21, xiv. 26–33). And so he made it a note of a man being a prophet and spiritual (xiv. 37), that he should observe order and give way to others. A spirit of mutual concession, the overcoming of all that self-assertiveness which is so characteristic of the drunken and self-indulgent, must characterise those who are filled with the Spirit of Him who gave Himself up for us (ver. 2).

In the fear of Christ.—This is the grand motive of all such submission. It must be rendered under a deep reverence for Christ. We call Him Master, and so we must not encroach on His prerogative. As we yield Him our own obedience, we must remember that others occupy this same position with ourselves. We must, from the reverence that we have for Christ, serve others, if thereby we can serve Christ, by rendering those whom we serve serviceable to Him. That this is the primary idea here attaching to "the fear of Christ" (*φόβος Χριστοῦ*) is

almost certain from the whole context. It is here the element in which those live who believe in and love Christ and God. The fear or terror of the Lord (*φόβος τοῦ κυρίου*) of 2 Cor. v. 11, as shown by way of warning to impenitent sinners, is quite different.

SECT. IX.—THE FAMILY LIFE (Chap. v. 22—vi. 9).

In this section the duties of family and social life are discussed on the same general lines as in Colossians, yet with some very notable and important differences. In Ephesians a transition is secured by the introduction of the thought of submission into the close of the preceding section, while in Colossians we pass, without any such preparation, quite abruptly into a new theme. Thus, whereas in Colossians the duties of wives and husbands are treated summarily, each being disposed of in a single verse (Col. iii. 18, 19), in Ephesians these duties are viewed, not only as those of submission and love respectively, but as teaching under these respective qualities the true mutual relation that should exist between the Church and Christ (v. 22—33). In the following exhortations to children and fathers, and to servants and masters, while in Ephesians we have considerable and important amplifications, the same general lines are pursued as in Colossians.

(1) *Duties of Husbands and Wives* (chap. v. 22—33).

Vers. 22-33. This section has a predominant dogmatic interest that overshadows the original ethical purpose. We have here the fullest systematic treatment of the doctrine of the Church found anywhere in Scripture. Under the figure of marriage are introduced the ideas of Christ as Head and of the Church as the body, already incidentally referred to in the epistle (i. 23, iv. 15). But from this the apostle again proceeds to take up the figure of marriage, appropriate to the section, in which the Church is the bride and Christ the Bridegroom.

Ver. 22. *Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands.*—The submission here enjoined is that renunciation of self-seeking and self-assertiveness which is required of all those who fear

the Lord. And the closeness of the connection between this section and the preceding one is shown in this, that the verb has to be supplied here from the preceding verse. But when this exhortation is addressed to wives, it is urged under the sanction of a further powerful motive. Those towards whom they are to manifest this spirit are "their own husbands" (comp. 1 Pet. iii. 1). The apostle does not mean sharply to distinguish these husbands from other men, but to strengthen his claim on their behalf for self-forgetful surrender on the part of the wives. If Christians generally, in the fear of Christ, are to manifest this spirit of self-abnegation, how much more when those on whose behalf this submission is called for are their own husbands! If they look at the matter aright, they will acknowledge the obligation without requiring that it should be enforced by enactment.—It is because of this idea of subjection that the order in each of the three correlated groups is the reverse of that which is usual. We have wives and husbands, not husbands and wives, because the apostle starts with the idea of subjection, and in his figurative use of the relationship rises from the Church to Christ.

As to the Lord.—Their subjection to Christ is the pattern according to which their bearing toward their husbands is to be determined. The husband stands to the wife in the same relation as Christ to the Church, and the subjection called for in the one case and in the other is the same. "When thou obeyest thy husband, think thou obeyest him as serving the Lord" (Chrysostom). This is the rule that ought to determine us in the discharge of every duty (comp. Col. iii. 23).

Ver. 23. *For a husband is the head of his wife.*—Here we have expressed what was implied in the statement of the previous verse. It is on the basis of this relationship between husband and wife that the wife is required to be in subjection. The same statement is made, though in a different connection, in 1 Cor. xi. 3. There is in both the one life, and yet there is relative inequality.

Even as Christ is Head of the Church.—Though in 1 Cor. xi. 3 Christ is described as Head of the man, this does not imply, as Sabatier and others insist, that the view taken of marriage by the writer of Ephesians is higher than that of

Paul in Corinthians. Von Soden speaks of this verse as a reminiscence of 1 Cor. xi. 3, corrected by Eph. i. 22, iv. 15. In that earlier epistle, as Godet points out, highest honour is put upon the marriage union when it is compared to the union of Christ to the believer and of God with Christ, and when it is said (vers. 11, 12) that the man is not without the woman, nor the woman without the man.

He the same is Saviour of the body.—This is an added clause, bringing in a new idea. There is no verb in the clause, but emphasis is laid on *αὐτός*. He who is Head the same is Saviour. The person of Christ is thus represented as combining the two functions of Head and Saviour, and that in the order in which they are here laid down. As Saviour or Redeemer of His body the Church, He has assigned to Him the rank of Head, and has, in the exercise of His mediatorial office, all power and authority given to Him of His Father (comp. ver. 25). The comparison between the relation of husband to wife on the one hand, and Christ to the Church on the other, is limited to the figure of the Head which is common to both, and does not extend to that of Saviour, which is peculiar to the relation of Christ to the Church.

Ver. 24. *But as the Church is subject to Christ.*—This final summing up of the matter goes back upon the statement of Christ's relation to the Church as Head. The Church is subject to Christ in recognition of this relationship. The "but" (*ἀλλά*) is employed to make it plain that the Saviour relation is not to be brought in here; yet though in this respect the relationships are not comparable, let it not be forgotten that in respect of relative subordination the comparison holds.

So let wives be to their husbands in everything.—The *ἐν παντί* is evidently to be interpreted on the understanding that the subjection claimed is such as is claimed by Christ for the Church. Obedience can be required only when the demand is Christ-like. This verse does not imply that Christian wives had been renouncing their position of subordination on the plea of Christ's redemption; but the apostle lays down a principle of Christian ethics, so that no misunderstanding may at any time arise.

Ver. 25. *Husbands, love your wives.*—Here we have a state-

ment of the duty of husbands, in terms closely resembling those in which the duties of wives are expressed. The husband's love is to be the ground of the wife's submission. The possession and manifestation of this love make the man worthy of the name and rank of husband, so that he is in a position to expect submission from the wife. His claims upon her should never be such as are inconsistent with love; they rather ought all to have their origin in love. It is only so long and so far as the wife's submission is purely under the constraint of love that her position is free from all degradation and bondage; and only in the measure in which the husband loves his wife can his authority be free from all harshness and injustice.

As Christ also loved the Church.—Christ is the pattern of the husband's love, as he had been set as the ultimate object of the wife's obedience (ver. 22). Here, as in the previous verses, the collective term "the Church" (ἡ ἐκκλησία) is employed, whereas in ver. 2 the concrete term "us" is used to describe the object of Christ's love. These two terms are exactly equivalent in respect of contents. "The word Church must not impose upon us, as though Christ loved the Church because she had put away her sins and robed herself in His beauty. Not for her beauty, but because she was destitute of beauty, and not for her righteousness, but because she needed righteousness, He devoted Himself to her. If the love of Christ to the Church is the pattern of a husband's love to his wife, his love must rather spring from what he can do for her, rather than from what she is to him" (Pulsford).

And gave Himself up for it.—Christ's self-surrender on behalf of His people is stated here precisely as in ver. 2. It involves the giving of Himself up to death. What was in the earlier passage declared of Christ's relation to individual believers, is here said of His relation to them collectively in the Church. The apostle does not, indeed, in any other epistle represent "the Church" as the object of Christ's self-sacrificing love. In Gal. ii. 20 he regards himself, individually, as the one on whose behalf Christ gave Himself up. In other passages in which a similar idea is expressed, individual sinners, and not a saved community, are represented as calling forth Christ's self-surrender (not ὑπὲρ ἐκκλησίας, as here, but

ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν, Rom. v. 6; ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, Rom. v. 8; ὑπὲρ πάντων, 2 Cor. v. 14). Yet this need not be used as an argument against the Pauline authorship of our epistle, seeing that in this same chapter, ver. 2, the very same statement is made, with ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, as in the earlier epistles. Evidently the ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν of ver. 2 and the ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς [ἐκκλησίας] of ver. 25 mean the same. Those for whom He gave up Himself are all sinners who believe in Christ, and the Church is simply the whole company of believers in Christ, Jews and Gentiles, embracing all the generations of mankind.

Ver. 26. *In order that He might sanctify it by the word.*—We have here the immediate purpose of Christ in giving Himself up for the Church. He loved the Church, not for any holiness that was originally in it, not because the individuals who came to hold place and rank in it were originally in any respect well-pleasing to God, but in order to produce those qualities in them. His purpose was to make those holy who were not holy, to sanctify (ἀγιάζειν) the Church. This is the term commonly used to describe the effect of the sacrifice of Christ. As applied to the Levitical sacrifices (Heb. ix. 13 sq.), it not merely signifies the bringing of the offerer into the ranks of those who belong to God, in terms of the covenant, but has also reference to the putting away of sin by moral renovation, whereby the sinner is fitted for the presence of God. In the case of Christians, this sanctification is not merely the cleansing of the conscience from the consciousness of guilt, but the memory of that which brings guilt.¹ This our text describes as the immediate object of Christ's sacrifice of Himself. Whenever the sinner is brought into relation to Christ, so as to have a personal interest in His death, he is not only justified, but he is sanctified. He is placed in immediate connection with God as belonging to Him, consecrated to God under the influence of purifying agencies, which will ultimately produce in him that perfect holiness and fitness for God's presence described in the next verse as the ultimate aim of Christ's sacrifice. It is the initial con-

¹ See the contrary view presented and insisted upon in Pfeiderer, *Paulinism*, ii. 68, 1877.

secration, the setting apart unto God, that is here specially intended, as is indicated by the use of the aorist, *ἀγιάσῃ*, which marks the historic fact. In His own sacrifice of Himself, in which He consecrated Himself to God, He also consecrated His Church (comp. Heb. xiii. 12).¹ That the ethical sense of sanctification is present, will be seen from the following clause in its connection with the present; but *ἀγιάζων*, as applied to the effect of Christ's sacrifice upon *the Church*, can only be in the religious or sacrificial sense. If it were used in its ethical sense it would be applied to individuals. The prominence here given to the idea of sanctification, as the immediate and inevitable effect of Christ's sacrifice on all who have an interest in it, is doubtless intended, as is also the placing of sanctification before justification in 1 Cor. vi. 11, to point out the contrast between the moral position of the Christian and that of paganism, and that pagan state of mind and feeling which was seeking to secure entrance into the Church. There has been considerable difficulty experienced in determining where the phrase "by the word" (*ἐν ῥήματι*) is to be brought in, and to what clause it is to be attached. It is evident that it might be attached (1) to *ἀγιάσῃ*, or (2) to "the washing of water," or (3) to "purifying" or the participial clause as a whole. For a good summary of these three possible arrangements, see Ellicott, who rejects the first two proposals in favour of the third. Without going into an examination of the three, we shall indicate briefly why we prefer the first, and join the phrase "by the word" to the clause "that he might sanctify it." Winer (*Grammar*, p. 172, 1882) rightly accounts for the absence of the article by attaching it to the verb, though he wrongly explains the relation of the participial clause to the principal clause preceding. "The word" is not, as Chrysostom supposes, the naming of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the baptismal formula, but the gospel, which comes as a message of salvation and as the terms of the new covenant by which men are brought into connection with God, as those consecrated to Him. Hence the apostle does not introduce an idea scarcely

¹ See Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1880, additional note on x. 10; *The Effects of Christ's Sacrifice*, pp. 344-347, also notes on xiii. 12, p. 440.

tenable in respect of doctrine (as Ellicott objects) in connecting ἐν ῥήματι with ἀγίαση, but would really do so by connecting it with καθάρσας, where the ethical idea of sanctification is made prominent. It is just in connection with ἀγίαση, presenting the idea of consecration and separation unto God, that ἐν ῥήματι is appropriate, as describing the means whereby it is accomplished (comp. Rom. x. 17). Those who respond to the *word of God* (ῥῆμα τοῦ Θεοῦ) are sanctified unto God, and so by the word Christ sanctifies the Church.

Cleansing it by the washing of water.—The aorist participle καθάρσας we render here by the present, in order to present in English what seems to be its true relation to the preceding clause. It has been usual to represent the participial clause as referring to something antecedent to that set forth in the words already commented on. It is assumed that the cleansing precedes, in time or in thought, the sanctifying just spoken of. And so we have the clause commonly translated thus, “after having cleansed it,” etc. It seems certainly very strange to assume priority on behalf of the ethical cleansing over the formal and ritual act of consecration. We should expect, first, setting apart, and then the beginning and continuance of the actual purifying of those thus set apart. This, too, is the meaning which we obtain from a careful and exact grammatical construction of the sentence. An aorist participle coming after an aorist finite verb, just as καθάρσας follows ἀγίαση, describes the way in which what is mentioned in the former clause has been carried out.¹ Christ sanctified His Church through the instrumentality of the word of the new covenant, and this consecration is made a reality by His cleansing that so set apart by the washing of water. In order of thought the sanctification or setting apart comes before the cleansing, the ethical sanctification, but in history and experience they are contemporary acts. The apostle rightly describes them by the use of the same tense, the aorist verb being followed by the aorist participle. If we translated *having cleansed*, this would imply priority in the cleansing; and so, to express the true relation of the clauses, we render *cleansing*.

¹ Hofmann. *Die Heilige Schrift Neuen Testaments*, iv. 1, p. 228, 1870.

As to the meaning of $\tau\hat{\omega}$ λουτρῶ τοῦ ὕδατος, the use of the word λουτρον in the New Testament (only here and in Titus iii. 5) and in the Apocrypha (Sirach xxxi. 30), leaves it quite undetermined whether it should be rendered in the active sense, *washing* or *bathing*, or in the passive, *the laver*, *the bath*, as the place where the washing is done. It does not seem at all necessary to assume here, or in Titus, that the reference must be to baptism. That the word came in patristic literature to be exclusively so applied, is no proof that this was the New Testament meaning of the term. So far as our passage is concerned, there is nothing said in the whole context to lead us to expect any allusion to that ordinance. It seems, then, more natural to speak of the cleansing as effected by the bathing rather than in the bath, all the more so when here the phrase "of water" is added to describe the material employed to produce the cleansing. The reference is most probably to the bath of the bride before marriage, which is in keeping with the whole style of the passage, and specially with the language of the following verse.

Ver. 27. *In order that He Himself might present to Himself the Church.*—We have in this clause a second "in order that" (ἵνα), introducing here the *ultimate* purpose of Christ's sacrifice, as the first in the previous verse introduced the immediate purpose. The sanctifying and purifying referred to, as resulting from Christ's giving up of Himself, are now viewed as themselves a means to a yet higher end. The Church is sanctified that it may be presented to and find acceptance with Him who takes her as His bride. Thus a peculiarity of procedure is here made distinctly prominent. In ordinary marriages the bride was given away by her own nearest relatives, after they had bathed and adorned her. But the heavenly bridegroom takes to Himself the bride whom He has made ready for Himself. It is His own atoning sacrifice that has prepared the bride for her husband, and so there is no room for an intermediary, as there is no work that an intermediary can do. The peculiar and elaborate phraseology ($\alphaὐτὸς \acute{\epsilon}\alpha\nu\tau\hat{\omega}$), as well as the detailed account of the minute preparations and the perfection that characterises them, show how deep and personal is the interest which Christ takes in

the members of His Church. He will do all for them and upon them Himself alone.

Glorious, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.—An account of the condition into which His cleansing had brought the Church, in order that it might be fit to be presented to Him as His bride. “Glorious” (ἐνδοξος) occurs in 1 Cor. iv. 10. The definition of Bengel is happy, “*Sanctitas est gloria interior, gloria est sanctitas emicans.*” “Not having spot” is a figure peculiar to our passage; while the word “spot” (σπίλος) occurs elsewhere in the New Testament in 2 Pet. ii. 13 (comp. also Jude 23). “Wrinkle” (ρυστίς), nowhere else in Scripture, means a drawing together, a sign of decay. This description is meant to contrast with what was said before of the moral state of heathenism (ii. 1–5, iv. 17, v. 14).

But in order that it might be holy and blameless.—The same words, ἁγίος, ἄμωμος, occur in the same order in chap. i. 4; Col. i. 22. In point of construction, the clause is dependent upon “present” (παραστήση).

The object of the whole statement is to give a powerful impression of Christ’s great love for the Church; hence there is no attempt to determine when this perfection will be reached, or how far it is attainable here.

Ver. 28. *Thus ought husbands to love their own wives as their own bodies.*—“Thus” (οὕτως), i.e. after the pattern of Christ’s giving up of Himself, which has in view solely the salvation of His Church. As Christ regards the Church as His own body, so, too, should husbands their wives.

He that loveth his wife loveth himself.—The wife being represented as the body of which the husband is head, the two are indissolubly one. Whatever is done to one is done to both. This is not an appeal to the selfish principle of self-love, but the laying down of the law of community of interests. The idea is taken up and carried out in the following verse.

Ver. 29. *For no one has ever hated his own flesh.*—Husband and wife are one flesh, they constitute one body; hence any injury done by one to the other is a schism within the one body, one part warring against the other.

But nourisheth and cherisheth it.—Every one is anxious to provide food for his own body and to keep it warm (comp. 1 Cor. xii. 23). The word “nourisheth” (ἐκτρέφει) occurs again in the New Testament only in chap. vi. 4; and “cherisheth” (θάλλειν) again only in 1 Thess. ii. 7. “Flesh” is here evidently synonymous with “body,” which word is avoided because of its metaphorical use in the passage. In regard to the “flesh” in the ethical sense, Paul urges (Rom. xiii. 14) that no provision be made for it (τῆς σαρκὸς πύργον).

In like manner also Christ the Church—Christ is thus represented as directing all His energies to the preserving and furthering of the purity of the Church. This statement, as Meyer beautifully says, “is the sacred refrain of the whole Christian ethics of marriage.”

Ver. 30. *For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.*—In these words the apostle gives the ground of his last statement concerning Christ’s interest in the Church. Christ thus deals with the Church, because we its members are the members of His body. The question must be examined as to the authenticity of the last part of the clause, “of His flesh and of His bones.” These words are not found in Σ^* , A, B, and are rejected by Lachmann, Tregelles, Tischendorf (in his last edition), and Westcott and Hort.¹ It is quite evident that the words in question were suggested by the passage in Genesis from which the following verse is quoted. What has to be decided is whether the suggestion was acted upon by the author of the epistle or by some later interpolator. This can be determined only on internal grounds, by considering whether the quotation of ver. 31 follows more naturally after the simple statement “we are members of His body,” or after the further clause now under discussion. It

¹ The words do indeed occur in a large number of good uncials. They are of interest just now as witnessed to by the Western texts, of which *Codex Bezae* and *Codex Clermontanus* are the principal representatives. In regard to this Western text, Westcott and Hort declare that its two chief characteristics are boldness of paraphrase and readiness to adopt extraneous matter, and as an illustration of its paraphrastic tendency they adduce what they regard as the addition to the true text in the verse before us (*New Testament in Greek*, vol. ii., “Introduction,” pt. iii. chap. ii. § 173, ed. 1882, p. 123).

seems to us, as will appear from the exposition of the following verse, that the words "for this cause," with which that quotation opens, have nothing in that first part of our text on which to fasten, and can be made intelligible only by the acceptance of the concluding phrase, "of His flesh and of His bones." Then, again, the omission of these words is easily explained, either from the accidents of transcription (each of the three phrases of our text ends with the same word, *αὐτοῦ*, so that the scribe may easily have taken the first for the third), or from the doctrinal prejudices of the transcriber, who may have taken offence at what might seem a materialising view of Christ's person in the use of the words flesh and bones.¹ It is not so easy to account for the insertion of the words, in consequence of any antignostic tendency, or in opposition to any form of ascetic heresy. We feel entitled, therefore, to retain the words. The whole verse puts, in a very strong way, the reason why Christ manifests such love to the Church. It does not go back to the proper origin of that love, which can never be explained or expressed in human language. It assumes the existence of the Church, the calling of sinners to union with Christ through faith, and shows why toward them, in the Church, Christ shows such love, and for them makes such ample provision. They are part and parcel with Himself in His incarnation. From this point of view, the lingering over the several constituents of His human form and being is peculiarly impressive. Believers are of Him just as really as Eve was of Adam. As she owed her physical being literally to her husband, so also the believers owe their spiritual and real being to Christ. And as Adam said of Eve, "She is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh," so Christ says of those who believe in Him, "They are members of my body, and of my flesh, and of my bones."

Ver. 31. *For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife.*—This is an exact quotation of Gen. ii. 24,

¹ See Klöpffer, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, pp. 182-183, 1891, who suggests that an Alexandrian theologian, with his doctrine of the *λόγος ὑσαρκίος* might naturally be offended at having the Church described as the *σὰρξ καὶ ὀστέα* of Christ.

made with almost exact literal precision from the LXX., and introduced without any sort of quotation formula. The absence of any such formula may be accounted for by the fact that all the readers of the epistle might be expected to be familiarly acquainted with its source. "For this cause" (*ἀντὶ τούτου* in our text, *ἐνεκεν τούτου* in the LXX., *בְּלִפְיָהּ* in the Hebrew), in the original pointed back to the preceding verse, "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," etc. (where in the LXX. the words are *ὀστέα* and *σάρξ*). Unless such words as these had been used by the apostle in ver. 30, he would naturally have omitted the phrase "for this cause" in his quotation. That phrase could not mean, "because they are members of my body," but only, "because they are taken out of Christ spiritually, as Eve was out of Adam physically,—this constitutes a relationship so close, that because of it a man shall leave," etc.¹—In our text the Old Testament words are adopted by the apostle, and used by him in a mystical sense. Just as men after the type of Adam leave all their nearest relations, in order to form with their wife the new relationship of marriage, so Christ, the second Adam, leaves His heavenly associations and relationship to enter into union with His bride, the Church, which owes its being spiritually to Himself.² It should thus be distinctly observed, that this verse does not refer to marriage of man and woman, as Gen. ii. 24 does, but to the mystical relation of Christ and the Church.

And the two shall be one flesh.—These words have no special fitness in reference to the mystical application of the

¹ The attempt made by Von Soden to make *ἀντὶ τούτου* refer back to the 29th verse, "no man ever yet hated," etc., and so to make the reference of ver. 30 primarily to marriage and not to the mystical relation of Christ and the Church, is far-fetched and unnatural; but those who insist on leaving out the latter part of ver. 30 cannot very well explain the connection in any other way.

² The singularly jejune remark of Beet, "The Son of Mary did not leave His mother in order to be united to the Church," misses the point in quite a ludicrous way. Equally objectionable is the attempt made by Goodwin to carry out into all details the mystical significance of the figure, by representing Christ as leaving His Father in heaven and His mother on earth (on occasions during His life and at last on the cross). See Goodwin's *Works*, ii., Sermon on Eph. v. 30-32, pp. 415-425, especially 424.

passage, and are not to be pressed further than as indicating the closeness of the connection between Christ and the Church.

Ver. 32. *This mystery is great.*—If the previous verse had referred simply or even primarily to marriage, such a statement as this would be exaggerated and unreal. Beyond the mystery of being itself, there is no special mystery here in the case of the marriage relationship. Only the understanding of what has been said in a mystical sense can justify our regarding it as a great mystery. To make the word apply to what follows, as Von Soden does, and say, “This mystery is great, *i.e.* the mystery which I am now about to call attention to, in respect of the mystical interpretation of that natural relationship of which I have spoken,” is not in accordance with the grammatical construction of the clauses of this verse, and the reference to chap. iv. 17 is not in point.—The word *μυστήριον* has been used before in this epistle, as we have seen, with reference to the divine counsel of grace toward the Gentiles, which was first fully revealed only to the apostles. In our text it is used in almost the same sense, but with a special application. It is here not merely something made mysterious by having been kept hidden, but something in its own proper nature mystical, transcendental, and not fully comprehensible. So also in 1 Cor. xv. 51. It is in both these passages distinctly the mystical sense and interpretation of an Old Testament saying as contrasted with its literal meaning. The relation between this meaning of the word, and that which it bears in the earlier passages, is evident, and it seems unnecessary to go further by rendering it “symbol,” as Hatch, in *Essays on Biblical Greek*, p. 60, proposes to do in this passage, as well as in Rev. i. 20, xvii. 7.—The Vulgate rendering, *sacramentum*, though repudiated by distinguished Catholic scholars, has been even recently made use of in authoritative Church documents as a proof-text in favour of the doctrine that marriage is a sacrament. Here we have the twofold error of understanding *μυστήριον* of marriage rather than of the mystical union of Christ and the Church, and of rendering the word by *sacramentum* in a sense that it cannot bear. It will be seen that Dr. Hatch,

in the passage above referred to, makes the same mistake in failing to see that *μυστήριον* should be understood of the mystical union and not of marriage as a *symbol* of that union.

But I speak concerning Christ and concerning the Church.—The construction of this clause (*λέγω εἰς Χρ.*) is precisely similar to Acts ii. 25 (*Δαυεὶδ γὰρ λέγει εἰς αὐτόν*). The plain meaning of the words is, "The greatness of the mystery consists in this, that I speak of Christ and the Church." It implies that had he spoken of the natural relationship there could have been no great mystery.

Ver. 33. *But this apart.*—By the use of the phrase *πλὴν καί*, the apostle turns from that aspect of the subject which had been engaging his thoughts to present another side of the truth. He now for the first time turns from the mystical view of the relationship in the three preceding verses. He desires to conclude with a practical counsel to husbands and wives. He would not have them suppose that the mystical view is the whole truth contained in the words. They must make application to themselves of the literal meaning.

Let each one of you so love his own wife as himself.—On the peculiar phrase "each one of you" (*ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἑνα ἕκαστος*) see the similar phrase in 1 Cor. xiv. 31. The apostle, passing over his spiritualising reflections, goes back upon ver. 28, and presses upon the husbands the duty and fitness of loving their wives as really one in being and in interests with themselves. The careful way in which the counsel is addressed to each individual among them without exception, shows that no plea whatever can exempt them from the discharge of this obligation.

And the wife that she reverence her husband.—Here the construction is changed. An example of the *oratio variata*. See Winer, *Grammar*, § lxiii. 2. 1, p. 722. The construction is elliptical, and requires something supplied; e.g., "Let the wife see that," etc. The same verb (*φοβεῖσθαι*) is used by the apostle in Col. iii. 22 with reference to the relations of slaves to Christ as their Lord. But it is not fair to say with Von Soden that wives are here put in the rank of slaves. It

is the fear becoming in a wife, not in a slave. When the apostle appends the word "husband," he qualifies the φόβος and determines its character, just as that described as φόβος Χριστοῦ is distinguished from all other sorts of fear.

(2) *Duties of Parents and Children* (chap. vi. 1-4).

Vers. 1-4. Having treated of the innermost centre of family life, in the relation of husband and wife, the apostle now proceeds to deal with the children, as the other members of the family group in its narrower sense, and their relation to the parents. Here again, as in the previous section, the position and duties of those in subjection, who owe obedience, are first considered, and then the corresponding obligations of those in authority. The general exhortation is based upon the fifth commandment. As given here, the fullest passage in Col. iii. 20, 21, is considerably amplified, by important additions under both heads of filial and parental duty. See two admirable and comprehensive sermons in Candlish's *Discourses on Ephesians*, pp. 283-315.

Ver. 1. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord.*—To "obey" is to listen (ὑπακούειν); to hearken respectfully and reverentially to the commands of one whose authority is recognised. Obedience is the salvation of the child. The sorest disaster that could befall any one would be to miss in youth the lesson of submission to authority. The position of parents is that of authority. As Christ is Head of the Church, and the husband the head of the wife, so are the parents the head of the family, rulers in the household, to enforce obedience. This obedience is to be rendered ἐν κυρίῳ. This term, just as everywhere throughout the epistle, indicates the sphere within which the prescribed duty must be performed. It is, of course, joined to "obey" and not to "parents." It may be assumed that those parents here referred to are members of the Church, and so regarded as "in the Lord;" but it is of the obedience that the apostle here speaks. It is to be rendered as a Christian duty; these children are to feel that, in obeying their parents, they are obeying and serving Christ.—Then, again, the children are addressed as evidently in the Church and recognised as members. It may

fairly be assumed that they are thought of as members by baptism. Hence it is not the obligation of nature that is laid on them, but that of religion and faith (comp. 1 Cor. vii. 14).

For this is right.—In the parallel passage (Col. iii. 20) we have *εὐάρεστον*, and here *δίκαιον*. In the word used here we may probably find a reference to chap. v. 9, where the fruit of the light is *δικαιοσύνη*, and also to the command of the law in the following verse. It is right, as a Christian duty rendered in the Lord. Those children who obey from this motive are walking as children of the light.

Ver. 2. *Honour thy father and thy mother.*—Literal rendering of the fifth commandment as given in LXX. (Ex. xx. 12; Dent. v. 16). The requirement of the Lawgiver is found to be exactly in accordance with the counsel of the Gospels. Nature, law, and grace demand the fulfilment of this duty. The recognition of woman's position in the family, and the mother's right to obedience alongside of the father, not generally acknowledged by antiquity, nor even generally in the Mosaic institutions, is here, happily, well to the front. It is an evidence of the non-revolutionary character of apostolic preaching and teaching, that here, just as in the case of slavery, no direct conflict with prevailing customs is inaugurated. Beyond quoting the Mosaic precept which named mothers along with the fathers as rulers in the house, to whom obedience must be rendered, no effort is made to raise woman's status; and in the following exhortations to parents only fathers are named. The principle, however, had been laid down in the doctrine of the community of interests, and, as we might even say, the unipersonality of husbands and wives, that would most surely and effectually secure due recognition of the mother's place and rights and duties in the family circle.

Which is the first commandment in respect of promise.—This commandment has first rank in this, that it has a definite promise attached to it. The fact of the Lawgiver lingering over this injunction, and giving explicit expression to a special promise in connection with it, gave it a certain pre-eminence in the code. It is not necessary to define more particularly

whether that code is the Decalogue or the whole Mosaic legislation. All that the apostle says is, that in respect of having a promise attached to it this commandment holds the first rank, without taking into consideration whether or not there may be others of a like sort. It is commonly said, in objection to giving such prominence to this commandment, that even among the laws of the Decalogue it is not by any means the most important. It is perhaps improper even to put the matter thus, as though it involved comparison between one law of God and another, where all is great and nothing small. But in respect of its importance in the construction of the basis of all moral order in the world it will rank second to none. In the family the parent stands in the place of God, and so the principle underlying the fifth commandment is the same that underlies the first. But the promise is specifically attached to the fifth rather than the first, because it refers to a sphere and a set of relations that might seem to be within the province of human rather than of divine law. On the principle that if a man loves not his brother whom he hath seen he will not love God whom he hath not seen (1 John iv. 20), the promise was attached to the fifth commandment, so that it might have peculiar prominence given it, and that the discipline of family rule and order, and obedience to parents on earth, might train heart and will to obey the unseen Father in heaven.

Ver. 3. *That it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth.*—The promise referred to in the last verse is here given almost literally from the LXX. of Exod. xx. 12; Deut. v. 16, with omission of the particularising clause which identified the earthly dwelling-place with Canaan as the good land of promise. This omission is no lapse of memory, nor yet from the assumption that the whole is known by the readers, but intentional, in order to apply the exhortation to all Christian children. It is practically the same promise that is made in Deut. v. 33 to those who will keep the whole law. And here we have the lesson, that he who keeps one commandment keeps all. The same reward, therefore, is offered for the keeping of the fifth commandment as for keeping all the commandments. The special blessing promised may seem

merely temporal and earthly, but the fact that it is in fulfilment of God's promise changes it completely. It is thus simply the visible and tangible pledge and assurance of His favour and good-will. Hence, when one who has obeyed the command does not apparently and literally secure the fulfilment of the promise, it can only be because God is fulfilling it to him in a far richer and more enduring way. "This, as all other promises of temporal things, is ever to be taken with that condition, without which they might change their quality, and prove rather punishments; but God always bestows them upon His own, and therefore ought to be understood so to promise them, in so far as they are fit for them, and may be truly good in their particular enjoyment, and as they conduce to a greater good" (Leighton, *Exposition of the Ten Commandments*).

Ver. 4. *And ye fathers do not provoke your children to wrath.*
 —The substantive *παροργισμός*, derived from the verb used in our text, *παροργίζειν*, has been considered already in the only New Testament passage in which it occurs (iv. 26). The idea present in noun and verb is violent anger, wrath, fury. Parents are here commanded to abstain from conduct that would have the effect of kindling such wrath in the hearts of their children (comp. Rom. x. 19; also Sirach iii. 16, iv. 2, 3). In the parallel passage (Col. iii. 21) *ἐρεθίζετε* is preferred by all recent editors to *παροργίζετε*, which is thought to have been copied into the common text from Ephesians. In Colossians, *ἀθυμία*, discouragement, is given as the result of irritating exactions on the part of parents. Here the consequence is not stated, but the fathers are exhorted to the exercise of a wise, well-directed discipline. The exhortation may even be understood in a wider sense, to discourage any manifestation of temper before, as well as in the treatment of, children, as may lead to the creation or strengthening of a wrathful spirit in them. The father who shows to his children an example of querulous, ill-natured, venomous criticism of persons and opinions, is provoking his children to wrath, rousing in them the wrathful spirit. The immediate reference, however, undoubtedly is to undue and unwise restraint, which tempts to revolt.

But bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.—This presents the positive over against the negative side of the exhortation. Fathers are not only to avoid doing anything to offend, but they must actively seek to supply their children with that which shall effectually prevent them from offending. It is the duty of fathers to nurture their children (ἐκτρέφειν, used only here and chap. v. 29, in the New Testament, to supply nourishment that the children may attain full growth and maturity). They are not merely to see that they have nourishment supplied, but they are to supply it themselves. What follows shows what form the administration of nourishment is to take, what the moral and spiritual nourishment is, and how it is to be conveyed to the children. Fathers are to do everything possible by deed and by word to further the moral and spiritual well-being of their children and secure their growth in grace. In this obligation of parents is included everything that will help their children to grow up toward the standard of the perfect man. The two departments, the one complementary of the other, in which parents must labour for that end, are described in our text by the terms παιδεία and νοουθεσία, signifying respectively training by act and training by word. The meaning of these two words is discussed by Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § xxxii. pp. 111–114, 1886.¹ In classical Greek παιδεία means simply “education,” but in Scripture it has the deeper meaning of chastisement or correction as the essential basis of all true and beneficial instruction. In our text it should be rendered not “nurture,” which is too weak, but “discipline,” indicating, as Trench rightly observes, “the laws and ordinances of the Christian household, the transgression of which will induce correction.” In νοουθεσία we have a milder term, applying as it does to words rather than acts; but the word may be one of strong and firm remonstrance where words of encouragement have failed. According to its derivation (νοῦς τίθημι), it means laying to heart, and so implies that the duty which is being enforced by exhortation has been

¹ On the difference of παιδεύειν and διδάσκειν, see Westcott on Heb. xii. 7 (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 400, 1889). On the difference of νοουθετεῖν and διδάσκειν, see Lightfoot on Col. i. 28 (*Epistle to the Colossians*, p. 170, 1880).

forgotten or is in danger of being forgotten.—The prevailing ruling character of this training by deed and by word is indicated by the words “of the Lord.” They who would exercise discipline and administer admonition, so as to bring up their children in the sense of the apostle’s exhortation, must be themselves animated by the Spirit of Christ, so as to do and say like Him and for Him. Whatever else in the education of children may and must be relegated to those who have been trained to the work and give themselves to it, the parent, as the Lord’s representative in his family, cannot assign to another, in the sense of relieving himself, the duty of imparting religious instruction.

(3) *Duties of Masters and Servants* (chap. vi. 5–9).

Vers. 5–9. The whole question of slavery in the early ages of Christianity and the relation of the Christian religion to it has been discussed with much keenness of interest in modern times. The most fitting place for a detailed examination of the relation of the inspired founders of the Christian churches and writers of the New Testament Scriptures to the institution of slavery is in connection with the Epistle to Philemon. Here it is enough to say that, in the exhortations given in our text and in Col. iii. 22, iv. 1, the apostle deals with the existing state of matters, simply laying down principles which the enlightened Christian conscience, in endeavouring honestly to carry out, must in time so apply as to overturn all injustice. Meanwhile, the apostle is specially concerned about the preserving of a true Christian spirit in slaves and masters, that will check the development of those faults by which these classes respectively are wont to be characterised, those evil passions which their respective positions are calculated to produce and foster. He would have both slaves and masters put themselves under the control of the Lord’s Spirit, that service may be rendered as to the Lord and not to men, and that authority may be exercised in submission to the Lord and after the pattern of the Master, who was amongst us as one that serveth.

Ver. 5. *Ye slaves, obey your masters according to the flesh.*—The qualification *κατὰ σάρκα* here, as in Col. iii. 22, was fitted

to comfort those whose masters made their service irksome and hard, by the thought which it awakened of the temporary character of the relation. But even in cases where such a thought alone could give comfort, the injunction to obey was imperative.

With fear and trembling.—Similar in expression and meaning to 2 Cor. vii. 15; Phil. ii. 12, and equivalent to the “fearing the Lord” of Col. iii. 22. The idea expressed in these and that of our text are brought together in the Epistle of Barnabas, xix., “ὕποταγήσῃ κυρίῳ, κυρίοις ὡς τύπῳ Θεοῦ, ἐν αἰσχύνῃ καὶ φόβῳ.” In view of those other passages, we may assume that these words do not mean a terror-stricken dread of the master’s severity, but an anxious care to perform to the utmost the duties of their office. The apostle would condemn the tendency, bred in slaves by the treatment to which they were often subjected, to consider deliberately how little they could do for their masters without incurring punishment, and would encourage a spirit of cheerful and hearty service to the utmost of their powers.

In singleness of your heart, as to Christ.—Singleness of heart (ἀπλότης) is in contrast to a characteristic vice of slavery—hypocrisy—which would assume the appearance of zeal in a master’s service. The eye-service condemned in the next verse, and singleness of heart here enjoined, are given in Colossians in the reverse order. The word is of frequent occurrence in Paul’s epistles, to indicate that openness that comes from a consciousness of truth and honesty. And this sincerity is to be shown in obedience rendered “as to Christ.” He who, in all his service, is aiming at serving Christ, can give no place to duplicity or hypocrisy in any form. He lives under the influence of “the fear of Christ” (ver. 22); and so his solicitude is real, and not assumed.

Ver. 6. *Not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers.*—This condemns the contrary of what was commended in the last clause. The word “eye-service” (ὀφθαλμοδοουλεία) occurs only here and in Col. iii. 22, and is probably a word coined by Paul for the occasion, to give forcible expression to his idea of service done only because the master’s eye was upon

the slave. The other word "men-pleasers" (*ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι*) occurs in LXX. of Ps. liii. 5. It is precisely the same in meaning as the previous phrase. "The vice was venial in slaves; it is inexcusable, because it darkens into theft, in paid servants; and it spreads far and wide. All scamped work, all productions of man's hand and brain which are got up to look better than they are, all fussy parade of diligence when under inspection, and slackness afterwards, and all their like, which infect and infest every trade and profession, are transfixed by the sharp point of this precept" (Maclaren on Col. iii. 22).

But as slaves of Christ.—It is Christ whom they seek to please, and not man. This position of slaves or bondmen of Christ they have in common with those who are free, and have no master according to the flesh (1 Cor. vii. 22). There is an emphatic contrast indicated between pleasing *men* and serving *Christ*; and this is dwelt upon in the following verse.

Doing the will of God from the soul.—These words define particularly the nature of the service and the manner in which it is rendered. "The will of God" here means that which God would have them do in their position as slaves. This they must do if they are slaves of Christ, for that work can mean nothing else than the possession of the desire to do this. And we can claim to be His only if we are moved in what we do by the innermost impulses of our being.

Ver. 7. *With good will rendering service as to the Lord and not to men.*—A precisely parallel clause to the concluding clause of the previous verse, describing further the nature of the service of the slaves of Christ. Their service is given with "good-will;" *εὐνοία* is in Scripture used only here and in the common text of 1 Cor. vii. 3 (where, however, we should read *ὁφειλή*); but the verb *εὐνοεῖν* is found in Matt. v. 25, "to be well-disposed toward one." This, then, is the disposition which slaves are to show to their masters by the way in which they do their work. It is not enough to do faithfully what is absolutely required in the master's absence as well as in his presence; but they must show goodwill to and take an interest in their work, so as to do it well. Now,

this might be impossible if they had only their masters according to the flesh to think of or to look to. But just here the powerful motive is introduced by the thought and presence of the heavenly Master.

Ver. 8. *Since ye know that whatever good each one shall have done, this he shall get back from the Lord.*—At the close of his exhortations, the apostle introduces the grand encouragement which in all ages has been found by all oppressed and ill-treated believers in Christ. He reminds them of that which they knew as a well-established and heartily accepted article of the faith: they shall all stand before the righteous Judge at last. In view of the judgment, no good deed shall be lost sight of. In 2 Cor. v. 10 we have a close parallel in sense and expression. There, as here, emphasis is placed on the fact that *each one* (ἕκαστος) shall be dealt with according to his own doing, and that the Judge's sentence will be a giving back (κομίζεσθαι), a repaying of his own doing, good or bad. The verb κομίζεσθαι is properly used here and in Col. iii. 25 of the receiving in judgment what was done in life. Each one receives the fruit of what he has done; but it is simply said that he receives that itself. Winer, *Grammar*, § lxvi. 1. 6, p. 775, happily compares it to our own phrase: he will reap the good or the wrong that he hath done. Similarity rather than identity of reward and deed is laid down in the Epistle of Barnabas, iv., “ἕκαστος, καθὼς ἐποίησε, κομιέται” (each will receive as he has done). What has been done by the servant of Christ in singleness of heart to Him, has been laid up as a *deposit* (Ellicott), and is received again without loss by the doer as he enters into the joy of his Lord.

Whether slave or freeman.—This is precisely equivalent to the declaration made in this connection in Col. iii. 25, and in the verses following our text, in the exhortation to masters, that with God there is no respect of persons. This, of course, is the fact which brings comfort to the oppressed bondmen. In the really critical and all-determining moment, they shall suffer no disability because they have been slaves. Before God, such distinctions have no existence. There is no hint given that Paul had any expectation that, before the Lord

came to judgment, slavery would be abolished. It may be, as Meyer suggests, that the expectation of the speedy advent of the Lord, which prevailed during the apostolic age, prevented the apostle considering the possibility of this, or raising the question even in his own mind.

Ver. 9. *And ye masters, do the same things towards them.*—Comprehensive statement of corresponding obligations of the masters. The fulness of treatment given to the duties of slaves allows the apostle to deal with the masters briefly, inasmuch as what was said to the slave was fitted to impress upon the master his corresponding duty. From the strong and reiterated affirmation of God's impartial treatment of all classes, the apostle proceeds to show that, as a teacher of ethics, he is an imitator of God. The same rule is applied to masters and slaves; toward one another, in their respective spheres, they must do the same things. Though this sameness of conduct is not restricted to any one department of duty or mode of action, it is interesting to notice that *εὐνοία*, "goodwill" (ver. 7), is a term which, according to the use of Greek writers, applies equally to the conduct of inferiors toward superiors, and of superiors toward inferiors. In this particular, by way of specimen, we may say, masters and slaves are to do the same thing toward one another.

Giving up threatening.—The reference is to an unhappily prevalent method of urging slaves in their labours. The article before *ἀπειλή* is used, as Ellicott rightly perceives, to indicate the prevalence of such procedure. The word itself occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in Acts iv. 29, and the verb *ἀπειλέω* only in Acts iv. 17 and 1 Pet. ii. 23. It means the terrorising efforts of a stronger party to make the weak do his will. In the passages in Acts especially, it corresponds to our word "bullying." This is its force in our text.

Knowing that the Master, both theirs and yours, is in heaven.—"Knowing," as in ver. 8, introduces the motive which, though differently expressed, is practically the same there and here. They are reminded by their very calling that they are men under authority, having men under them whom they command. They hold their rank as representatives of God:

οἱ κύριοι, having delegated to them an authority from ὁ Κύριος, but not in such a way that ὁ δοῦλος ceases to be in every respect as directly as his κύριος κατὰ σάρκα directly under the rule and protection of ὁ Κύριος ἐν οὐρανοῖς. In presence of the heavenly Master, bond and free have equal rights and equal obligations. Masters remembering this will act justly and kindly to their slaves.

And there is no respect of persons with Him.—What has been implied throughout, and in various connections pretty distinctly stated, is here put in the most explicit language. It is given in Col. iii. 25 as the closing word to the slaves; here as the final solemn appeal to masters. This illustrates the principle that masters and slaves are to do the same things, since the same motives are presented to both. They are both to live under a sense of the just and impartial procedure of the God with whom they have to do, who will be their Judge, and whom they are both alike called upon to imitate.

An interesting parallel to this whole verse is found in the Epistle of Barnabas, xix., where "The Way of Light" is described: "Thou shalt not issue orders with bitterness to thy maid-servant or thy man-servant, who trusts in the same God, lest thou shouldst not reverence that God who is above both; for He came to call men, not according to their outward appearance, but according as the Spirit hath prepared them."

SECT. X.—ARMOUR FOR THE LIFE OF TEMPTATION AND STRUGGLE (Chap. vi. 10–20).

Vers. 10–20. The apostle abruptly passes to his closing exhortation. Yet though there is no attempt made to mark the connection, and indicate in words the transition from what he has been saying, it is quite evident that there is a connection in thought, and that our section is not unconnected with the preceding context, but comes in most naturally just at this point. We have seen that the epistle is entirely occupied with descriptions of the old nature and the new, and with warnings against any recurrence to the old and exhortations to the cultivation of the new. The idea of struggle against

old sinful habits, of resistance to temptations to unfaithful compromise with the world and sin, has been kept to the front throughout the whole epistle. What more fitting conclusion could we have for such a writing, than just this vivid picture of the fight in which we are engaged, the enemies that rage against us, and the armour in which we encase ourselves for protection against their attacks, and for the slaying of those who otherwise would slay us? There is no passage corresponding to this in Colossians. There the section on relative duties is immediately followed by that exhortation to prayer which forms the close of our passage. The same idea of the Christian life as a warfare is found, however, elsewhere in Paul's epistles, *e.g.* 1 Thess. v. 8; 2 Cor. vi. 7, x. 4; Rom. xiii. 12. In the present section there is a combination of the ideas of soldier and wrestler. Yet it can scarcely be said that what is described is an armed wrestler or gladiator. This theory has been presented and argued in an ingenious and interesting manner in a recent number of the *Expository Times*.¹ But there is an evident incongruity in the introduction of a gladiatorial contest in our passage. The prominent idea of the passage is the bitterness of the enmity of those who oppose the Christian in this fight, as arising out of their contrary nature. The opponents are not like gladiators set to fight against one another in a deadly combat. It is a conflict between children of light and powers of darkness. The combatants are by nature opposed, and wherever and whenever they meet they must fight because of this essential opposition, without any other party being required to set them against one another. It seems better to regard the apostle as having before his mind simply the idea of conflict, which he describes indifferently as a wrestling or as a fighting in battle, while the pieces of armour mentioned are simply those of the soldier which most readily lend themselves to the representation of the several parts of the spiritual equipment of God's warriors. —In vers. 10-12 we have a general description of the nature and conditions of the conflict. In vers. 13-20 we have a particular account of the means to be used and the weapons

¹ *Expository Times* for May 1891, pp. 181, 182, paper on Eph. vi. 12 by Rev. J. Rutherford.

required in the conflict, the climax being reached in the exhortation to prayer, personal and intercessory.

Ver. 10. *Henceforth, be strengthened in the Lord and in the power of His might.*—The adverbial phrase τοῦ λοιποῦ occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in Gal. vi. 17. In his closing exhortation the apostle desires to show the Ephesians how he would have them conduct themselves, what attitude he would have them maintain, in the time to come.—The exhortation is given here in its most general form. What is needed is the maintenance and increase of spiritual strength to fit us for holding our ground. “Be strengthened” (ἐνδυναμοῦσθε, Rom. iv. 20; Heb. xi. 34, etc.), be made strong, which can be accomplished only *in the Lord*. In union with Christ this strength is obtained. For all that follows this is the indispensable pre-requisite, the condition of all successful employment of the weapons of the Christian warfare.—In regard to the second phrase in this clause, the words κράτος and ἰσχύς have been explained in the note on chap. i. 19. By his union with Christ the Christian soldier has at command the inexhaustible resources of omnipotence. He has fellowship with Christ in that victorious exercise of power (κράτος) which results from the existence of that inward strength (ἰσχύς), which obtains expression in such successful strivings for the mastery. The courageous disposition owes its origin to, and is dependent for its maintenance upon, union with Christ. Natural courage and daring do not contribute to success in this spiritual contest. It is, therefore, an instance of Bunyan’s deep spiritual perception, when we find him representing many of the most unflinching and persistent of his pilgrims as naturally timid and anxious to avoid conflict. All that contributes to victory is got from Christ, and is held by continued fellowship with Christ (comp. 2 Cor. xii. 19).

Ver. 11. *Put on the whole armour of God.*—“The whole armour” (ἡ πανοπλία) means the armour in all its parts. The word occurs again in the New Testament only in ver. 13, and in Luke xi. 22; but is found frequently in LXX. and Josephus. It occurs in Wisdom of Solomon, v. 18, where we have a singularly close parallel to this passage; which, however, is

itself an imitation of Isa. lix. 17, which probably suggested to Paul the use of this figure here, and in 1 Thess. v. 8. The passage in Wisdom, v. 18-20, runs as follows: "He shall take to Him His jealousy for *complete armour* (πανοπλία), and make the creature His weapon for the revenge of His enemies. He shall put on (ἐνδύσεται) righteousness as a breastplate, and true judgment instead of a helmet. He shall take holiness as an invincible shield. His severe wrath shall He sharpen into a sword." What is said in the writing of the prophet, and after him in the Apocrypha, of God as the God of Hosts, is said by the apostle of those who have made God's strength their own. The idea of the apostle again is imitated, with variations in detail, by Ignatius in his Epistle to Polycarp, vi.: "Let your baptism abide with you as your shield; your faith as your helmet; your love as your spear; your patience as your *body armour* (πανοπλία)." This armour is called God's (ἡ πανοπλία τοῦ Θεοῦ), because it is provided by God, and is in each of its parts something pertaining to God, belonging to His being, which in Christ He shares with those who believe. It is to be put on, in the sense in which the new man is put on (chap. iv. 24), and the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. xiii. 14). It all exists in God, is provided for us by Him in Christ, and needs only to be appropriated by us to ourselves as our own. We have only to put it on.

That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.—The reason for putting on the armour is here stated. What is needed is strength on the part of the saints, strength of heart and will and understanding. This can be secured only by their putting on the whole armour of God. When this has been put on they will be able to stand, to hold their ground against all comers. It is a military term. Thus, *e.g.*, Xenophon uses στῆναι in opposition to φεύγειν, of holding as opposed to deserting the field. The word rendered "wiles" (μεθοδεΐαι) we have met with already in chap. iv. 14, and it is found nowhere else in sacred or profane literature, except in patristic and later writings. In Justinian it is used of occupation, business. The verb μεθοδεύειν means to follow up by a crafty plan, to lay cunning schemes. So LXX., 2 Sam. xix. 26, where Mephibosheth complains of having been

deceived by Ziba, who had slandered him. It is also used by Polycarp in his Epistle to the Philipppians, vii., "Whosoever shall pervert (μεθοδεύη) the oracles of the Lord," etc. Its general meaning is to tamper with, to lay deliberate schemes to turn aside. There can, therefore, be no uncertainty as to the meaning of the word in our text. They are the wiles, the stratagems, the machinations of the devil that we have to hold our ground against. In meaning the word is quite equivalent to the *νοήματα τοῦ Σατανᾶ* of 2 Cor. ii. 11.

Ver. 12. *For our wrestling is not with flesh and blood.*—The apostle here gives the reason for insisting upon such preparation. The conflict is of no ordinary kind. The enemy is one whose skill in stratagem demands that no precaution be neglected. Had he been a man like ourselves, human devices and provision might be quite sufficient to oppose to his preparations. But it is not with one "of flesh and blood" that we are challenged to fight, hence the source of our preparation must be outside of and above the human sphere. By "flesh and blood" he does not mean the fleshly, sensuous desires of our own corrupt nature, but simply humanity viewed as weak and liable to decay, in contrast to the hosts of spiritual powers of which he proceeds afterwards to speak. The word "wrestling" (πάλη) means a contest in which the one combatant shakes the other in the endeavour to throw him. This is the only place in Scripture where it occurs. The reference to the wrestling here is merely incidental. As we have indicated, in the introduction to this section (see also Meyer on this passage), the apostle, after telling us, in terms of the wrestling match, what the struggle of the Christian is not, immediately passes on to speak of what that conflict is, in terms of a battle or fight between armed soldiers. But while this is a fight between armed combatants, it is on our part a personal engagement, single combat, for which we must individually prepare ourselves, just as the wrestler had to do.

But with the principalities, with the powers.—These names, which are here evidently given to our spiritual enemies, to agents and emissaries of Satan the great adversary, were used, as we have seen, in chap. i. 20, to indicate special classes of good

angels. An extremely interesting investigation of the angelological statements of Colossians has been made by Klöpper in his able commentary on that epistle, followed up by Von Soden in the introduction to his commentary, and elaborately examined in an able monograph by Everling (*Die Paulinische Angelologie und Dämonologie*, pp. 84–112, 1888). “Principalities and powers” (ἀρχαί and ἐξουσίαι) are regarded as orders of angelic beings, in themselves neither good nor evil, but relatively in opposition to God, and at the disposal of Satan. This theory is not reconcilable with the modes of scriptural representation. The principalities and powers here mentioned are regarded as occupying in Satan’s kingdom a similar place to that which those mentioned in chap. i. 20 occupied in Christ’s kingdom. In the one case they are subject to Satan, in the other to Christ. In both cases they mean beings that, in might and influence, come next in rank and significance to their respective princes. As surely as the one is good, the other is evil. That they have given them the same names as the most exalted princes in the kingdom of God, is certainly meant to indicate that these beings are worthy of being compared in respect of strength only with those strong angels of God. It is this equivalence of power which is emphasised here by the use of the same names, and this it is that gives point to the exhortation to see to it that we omit nothing of the complete armour provided for us of God.

With the world-rulers of the darkness.—This very peculiar clause (πρὸς τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τούτου) describes apparently the same foes referred to in the former clause with respect to their activity in a special sphere. This name (κοσμοκράτωρ) was used by Marcion for the Demiurgus, the God of the Jews; while in the Valentinian system he is the devil proceeding from the hylic substance. In its literal and natural sense, it was applied to the Roman emperor. In the *Testamentum Solomonis*, the seven spirits appearing to Solomon say, “ἡμεῖς ἐκ τριάκοντα τριῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κοσμοκράτορος τοῦ σκότους. In the plural, as in our text, they are the hosts of the κοσμοκράτωρ. As used by the apostle, it seems to have been suggested by the Jewish notion that

the Gentile nations had been portioned out among the angels, whom later Judaism had more particularly characterised as evil angels or demons. The character of the rulers is indicated quite unmistakeably by the description given of the world as subject to their rule. They have made it a world of darkness because they rule it as spirits of darkness (comp. 2 Cor. iv. 4).

With spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places.—The name *πνευματικά*, which has been evidently assumed in the descriptions given of the enemies whom we have to stand against, is now explicitly given. "*Τὰ πνευματικά* are not merely *τὰ πνεύματα*, but, in accordance with the force of the collective neuter adjective, denote the bands, hosts, or confraternities of evil spirits" (Ellicott). These hosts are not mere elements or personifications of physical movements, *c.g.* winds, storms, earthquakes, lightnings, etc. They are not *τὰ σαρκικά*, but *τὰ πνευματικά*. They are under the control of a powerful spirit as their prince, but their own nature is similar to his, each a miniature of himself. This gives a reality and significance to the plural form *κοσμοκράτορες*. The god and prince of this world has around him hosts, whose nature, like his own, is spiritual, and who are capable of ruling and of severally advancing, in their different provinces, the interests of the kingdom of darkness. They are not merely a multitude of forces at the prince's command, but they are a host of spiritual powers. At the same time, they are called *πνευματικά* rather than *πνεύματα*, because they are not merely like men wrought upon by him as *τὸ πνεῦμα*, etc. (ii. 2), but they are essentially manifestations of himself, modes of expression for his own very being. They are described, in respect of character and working, as "spiritual hosts of wickedness" (*τὰ πνευματικά τῆς πονηρίας*). They are in nature essentially wicked. In 2 Thess. iii. 3, and in ver. 16 of our chapter, the devil is called *ὁ πονηρός*. The leader and his myrmidons are of one character, one disposition; and so the work of wickedness in which they engage is the natural expression of their very being, and to the doing of it they lend all their powers without grudging or intermission. It is the superhuman might, as well as the

unceasing activity of these spiritual hosts of wickedness, that is here emphasised. The contrast is between them and mere weak flesh and blood. The expression in this clause which has occasioned most discussion is ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις. The translation of the Authorised Version "in high places" is evidently an attempt to avoid offence by the use of the word "heavenly" to describe a region in which a conflict is carried on, and where hosts of evil are represented as still present. The same phrase is literally rendered in the other places in our epistle, where it occurs, i. 3, 20, ii. 6, iii. 10. In the Revised Version our text is rightly conformed to the others. The phrase undoubtedly indicates the region in which those spirits dwell who carry on the contest, rather than the region in which the contest is conducted. Those explanations which make ἐν equivalent to ὑπέρ or διά, so as to make our text refer to a conflict about heavenly or spiritual things, may be dismissed at once. As thus understood of locality, τὰ ἐπουράνια must be regarded as practically synonymous with τὸ ἀήρ of chap. ii. 2. The previous description of the enemy's domain served to indicate their nearness and the ready access which they had to mankind. Their region is above that of men, yet closely surrounding it. The same idea is presented in an intensified form in the figure of our text. The ἐπουράνια are still more distinctly regions which afford to the dwellers in them points of vantage for attack upon the dwellers upon the earth. The idea of the superhuman might of the spiritual hosts of wickedness is set forth with peculiar emphasis by thus locating them in heavenly places.¹ And such an interchange of ἀήρ and ἐπουράνια would not be regarded by the reader of the epistle as in any way unnatural or unallowable. The use of both words in such works as The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and The Ascension of Isaiah, to indicate the residence of the evil spirits, shows that no offence or misunderstanding was likely to arise from the interchange of

¹ "The reason why Paul does not here say ἐν τῷ ἀήρῳ is, that he wishes to bring out as strongly as possible the superhuman and superterrestrial nature of the hostile spirits, for which purpose to name the air as the place of their dwelling might be less appropriate than to speak of the heavenly regions, an expression which entirely accords with the lively colouring of his picture" (Meyer).

the terms. The *ἐπουράνια*, then, are not the higher regions of heaven, but the lower regions of our own atmosphere, near us and yet above us, and affording to those dwelling in them facilities for movement that we have not. Under this figure the dangerous character of our enemy is impressively set before us. The spiritual beings lurking there are not messengers of God sent to discipline and chastise, but agents of the wicked one who tempt to sin. An altogether different meaning has been given to *ἐπουράνια* by Eadie, and set forth in a singularly powerful and graphic manner by Dr. Candlish in his sermon "On the Heavens," *Discourses on Ephesians*, pp. 11–15. The heavens are regarded as forming the contrast to the darkness of this world. In that latter region the evil spirits have their domain, and there they rule as principalities; but in the heavens they are intruders, and so can act there only as powers. But this distinction between principalities and powers is purely fanciful, and the conception of *τὰ ἐπουράνια*, as applying to a state rather than a place, does not suit the context, which requires the indication of locality. It is no doubt quite true that in the world Satan has sway, and that if he finds believers there he has an advantage over them, so that their only safety lies in flight back into their own spiritual domain; and it is quite true that Satan follows them into this spiritual region only to be defeated by the Prince of that country, who fights for us. But these are not the truths presented in this verse. The idea here is that of the superhuman might of the spiritual hosts of wickedness, which is described as lying, not only in their rank and authority, but also in the superior advantages and opportunities afforded by their superterrestrial abode.

Ver. 13. *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God.*—The apostle here reiterates what he had enjoined in ver. 11, but now on the ground of what had been said. "For this cause" (*διὰ τοῦτο*), seeing that it is an enemy of this sort, so powerful, possessed with so many advantages over you, stronger in himself beyond all comparison, and occupying a position from which he can at all times and from all sides sweep down upon you, nothing else can save you than the possession and use of the panoply God has provided. The word *ἀναλαμβάνειν*

means to take up, to assume, and was the usual military term for putting on armour for use. It is employed by ecclesiastical writers, *e.g.* Justin, Theodoret, etc., of Christ's *assuming* the human form.

In order that ye may be able to withstand.—These words indicate the attitude that has to be assumed and maintained, and how alone this is possible. The past tenses active of the verb *ἀνθίστημι*, which properly means *to set against*, as well as the middle, mean *to set one's self against*, to withstand. The duty of the Christian, in presence of his spiritual foes, is resistance (James iv. 7); and this can be offered only by those who have put on God's armour. If one be foolhardy enough to attempt to stand without any particular piece of this equipment, he must soon fall.

In the evil day.—This is added in order to call attention to the *absolute indispensableness* of the preparation here commended. In v. 16 the fact that the days are evil is advanced as a reason for making a wise and diligent use of the time. At that place the precise meaning of *πονηρός* has been carefully discussed. The meaning of the words "in the evil day" (*ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ πονηρᾷ*) is, "in the season of abounding wickedness, in the day when the spirits of wickedness sweep down upon you with a malignant rush, endeavouring to overwhelm and carry you away before them." Very many expositors, both in ancient and in modern times, have been disposed to regard the apostle as thinking of a particular season in the history of the world and the Church, when the forces of Satan were massed together and concentrated in order to engage in one great decisive conflict, which would determine once and for ever whether God or Satan should have the mastery. It was thought of as that day of struggle which would immediately precede the millennial reign of Christ. But it is evidently addressed to believers as such, and the context supplies no hint that the apostle was thinking of any such great final crisis. Nor did Paul speak differently in his earlier epistles. In Gal. i. 4, "the present evil world" (*ὁ αἰὼν ὁ ἐνεστὼς πονηρός*) is certainly that period of conflict which life in this world, throughout its whole duration, must prove to all those who will live godly in it. The

definiteness of it, as shown by the repeated use of the article, is undoubtedly intended to indicate that, while the whole period of life in this world, just because it is in the world that lieth in the wicked one, is the evil day, special periods will recur in which the attack is made with peculiar violence. To be ready for these we must be ready always. The whole day is evil, full of trouble and anxiety, for we know not when or how the attack may be made.

And, having done all, to stand.—The ultimate result following the warrior's appropriating and using the armour. Encased in that armour he has been able to *withstand* each several attack; and then, after he has passed through these, so that it would seem that he has borne all sorts of attacks, and has been thoroughly proved on every side, he must still continue to wear the armour in order that he may stand, that he may hold the field. The assumption is that the victory has been very decided. The verb *κατεργάζεσθαι* means to complete, to finish, and *ἅπαντα* implies that everything, to the minutest detail, has been accomplished; that every part of the conflict has been gone through with; that all the varieties of the *μεθοδία* of the devil have been met and baffled. Then comes the temptation to throw off armour, and rest. But, so soon as this is done, proof comes that the evil day is still present. When victory has been gained the field must be kept. "Having done all, there is the grace of victory; to stand, there is the grace of constancy. Having done all, the idea is that of success amid the strain of the battle; to stand, the idea is that of perseverance amidst the monotony and temptations of the succeeding peace. Having done all, the expression denotes the fortitude that wins; to stand, the expression means the patience, the heedfulness, and the humility that keep a man in possession of the ground he has won."¹ The *σπῆναι* of our text is not the same as that of ver. 11, for the word in that former verse was used of the preparation for the fight, but in this of the attitude maintained after the fight. It is also contrasted with the withstanding, which

¹ See a most admirable illustration of this text in a post-communion sermon on the danger of reaction, by Rev. W. A. Gray of Elgin, in *The Shadow of the Hand and Other Sermons*, pp. 111–132, 1885.

corresponds to that previous duty. To withstand (*καθίστημι*) is clearly the same as to stand against (*στῆναι πρὸς*). Chrysostom, after having wrongly interpreted *ἅπαντα* of all passions and evil lusts, proceeds rightly to explain what is implied by standing. "Even after the victory we must stand. An enemy may be struck, but things that are struck revive again. If we stand not, they are even now rising up, though fallen. So long as we waver not, the adversary rises not again."

Ver. 14. *Stand, therefore, having girt your loins about with truth.*—These words describe the attitude of those who, having taken up the panoply, are ready for the fight.—The description of the several parts of the armour begun here is not to be regarded as a thoroughly complete enumeration of all the parts of the Christian soldier's equipment. For this reason it is not safe to indulge in minute spiritualising upon each several article in all its possible uses. The apostle confines his enumeration to those graces that are distinctively called into requisition in defending ourselves against the attacks of our spiritual enemies, and represents them under the best known and most conspicuous of the pieces that formed the coat of mail of the Roman soldier, adding simply one offensive weapon, to show that we must not merely stand, in the sense of refusing to give way before the adversary's onslaught, but that we must be prepared to drive the intruder away.—The first piece of armour referred to is the girdle. The name "girdle" (*ζώνη*), though not expressly used here, is implied in the participle (*περιζωσάμενος*). We have a close parallel in Isa. xi. 5: "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and truth the girdle of His reins." The use of the girdle is to impart firmness to the body, and to keep in place all the other parts of the armour. Having it on is regarded as an indication and evidence of preparedness (Luke xii. 35). With precisely the same idea before him, Peter, using another compound of this same word, exhorts to watchfulness: "Gird up the loins of your mind" (1 Pet. i. 13). That Christian grace which proves to the Christian soldier what the girdle around his loins does to the man who has to fight in the ranks, is truth (*ἀληθεία*). The distinction commonly made

here between objective and subjective truth is not appropriate. It is clearly subjective, in the sense that it is a Christian grace, and therefore an inner spiritual possession; but it is also objective, inasmuch as it is the appropriation of the truth as it is in Jesus (iv. 21). It should rather be described, "The truth of God in Christ used defensively, for personal nourishment and edification." It thus gives stability and firmness to the whole spiritual being. His conviction that he has Him that is true (1 John v. 20), that the Spirit of truth is shed abroad in his heart, imparts to the Christian soldier a nimbleness of movement, and an agility in the use of all his weapons, which the man who cannot trust himself, is not sure what manner of spirit he is of, can never have.

And having put on the breastplate of righteousness.—The *θώραξ* is properly the breast, from the neck to the lowermost rib, and then secondarily the breastplate for covering that part of the body. In Isa. lix. 17 and Wisdom v. 19, the figure occurs in precisely the same form as in our text; but in 1 Thess. v. 8, faith and love, and not righteousness, are described as the breastplate. The righteousness meant in our text is evidently not, as in the Old Testament and apocryphal passages, the rectoral justice of God; nor is it the righteousness of justification through faith in Christ, for faith is introduced in ver. 16. It is rather righteousness, in the general sense of uprightness and integrity of life. This, as a Christian grace, is the fruit of the Spirit's indwelling.—The two pieces of armour first named are evidently closely related—indeed, inseparably associated. Just as in the description of the new man (iv. 24), *δικαιοσύνη* and *ἀληθεία* are brought together, so also here. These are the indispensable elements in Christian holiness, without which no man can hold or wield any of the other weapons of the Christian warfare. The enemy deals in deceit, and works by wiles. In his own province he is master. Only those who are not themselves deceivers will not be deceived by him. He can find no entrance into the heart encased in truth and righteousness.

Ver. 15. *And having your feet underbound with the prepara-*

tion of the gospel of peace.—The “preparation” (ἐτοιμασία) is by some understood of preparedness for the spiritual conflict which secures to the Christian soldier the enjoyment of eternal peace. It is compared by Von Soden to the Pauline idea of παρρησία. By others it is understood to mean a firm foundation; and the clause is rendered, “with the firm ground which the gospel of peace affords.” The use of this word in the LXX., the Hexapla, and the New Testament, has been carefully traced by Dr. Hatch (*Essays in Biblical Greek*, pp. 51–55, 1889). He finds that as used to translate the Hebrew נָצַח, “to set up, to make firm,” ἐτοιμάζειν, which in classical Greek meant “to prepare,” in Hellenistic Greek came to be identified in meaning with the Hebrew word which it was commonly used to translate. In the New Testament, in many passages, the context shows that the original meaning is that intended. In our text, the only New Testament passage in which ἐτοιμασία occurs, Dr. Hatch thinks it should be rendered, as in certain Old Testament passages, “firm foundation,” or “firm footing.” Perhaps the best parallels are: Ps. lxxxix. 15, δικαιοσύνη καὶ κρίμα ἐτοιμασία τοῦ θρόνου σου; Zech. v. 11, ἐπὶ τὴν ἐτοιμασίαν αὐτοῦ (upon her own base). This meaning is certainly allowable, if demanded by the context and in accordance with the language of figure employed. It seems, however, absolutely impossible to give any natural sense to the figure of our text by this explanation of the word. The figure is that of a soldier preparing himself for the battle by binding under (ὑποδεῖσθαι) his feet the military sandals (ὑποδήματα), soles bound under the feet by thongs, and thus fitting himself to take part in the fight. Surely such an act is much more naturally described as a preparation, or the making of one’s self prepared, than by the introduction of the idea of stability and firmness of foot! If we keep before us the figure of the battle, we shall see that no other idea than that of preparedness will suit. The soldier who has his sandals bound upon his feet is nimble in his movements on the battle-field, and is ready for any change of position required by his enemies’ tactics. This preparation, in the equipment of the Christian soldier, is fittingly described as

consisting in his possession of the gospel of peace. This gospel, which has the peace of God for its contents, is that which affords preparedness to the Christian soldier. He who is to fight his spiritual enemies must have the peace of God ruling in his heart. He who is at war with God and with himself cannot fight his spiritual foes. He is like an unshod soldier; the painfulness and difficulty of his movements occupy his attention and take his mind off the conflict which should have his undivided attention.—The interpretation favoured by many earlier expositors, and repeated by Klöpper, which sees in the text an exhortation to heartiness of zeal in spreading the gospel among others, is not in the very least in keeping with the idea of the combat urged against spiritual foes, preparation for which is the one subject treated of in the whole section.

Ver. 16. *In all cases taking up the shield of faith.*—The reading *ἐν πᾶσι* (accepted by Lachmann, Westcott and Hort, on the authority of \aleph , B, etc.) is better suited to the context than the common reading *ἐπὶ πᾶσι* (defended by Meyer, Ellicott, etc.). The reading of the common text properly means not “over all” in the sense of being superimposed, nor “above all” in the sense of superior importance, but “over and above all” in the sense of addition. This could only have been used appropriately if it had been employed regarding the last-named article of armour, *i.e.* at the earliest, in connection with the last clause of the following verse. It was in all probability introduced as a correction from Col. iii. 14. The reading now generally accepted serves simply to call special attention to the importance of faith to the Christian soldier, which is as indispensable to him on all occasions as the shield was to the Roman legionary. It does not imply that in any case any of the other parts of armour may be dispensed with; it simply affirms that in all cases this one is necessary. The indispensableness of this one article may even be seen in this, that if that faith which is the shield be rightly understood, its possession will necessarily involve the possession of all those other graces represented figuratively under the other parts of the panoply.—The *θυρεός* mentioned here is the large shield, *scutum*, of the heavy-armed soldier, as distinguished from

ἀσπίς, *clipeus*, the smaller shield, and does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. Compare Ps. xxxv. 2 in LXX., ἐπιλαβοῦ ὄπλου καὶ θυρεοῦ. The suitableness of the comparison is evident. Faith in God, especially as faith in Christ, makes the Christian soldier invulnerable, so that only steadfastness in faith (1 Pet. v. 8) is needed in order to repel all attacks. But this faith secures union with Christ, and so brings His Spirit to make righteous and true, and that gospel of peace which imparts nimbleness of movement and alacrity of spirit.

Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one.—The shield of faith will prevent the burning darts of the enemy from piercing the child of faith who holds it, so that they will fall harmless. In Ps. vii. 13, flaming arrows, and in Ps. xviii. 15, lxxvii. 18, the lightnings are the weapons of God for scattering His enemies and proclaiming His power. The βέλη πεπυρωμένα of the text are characterised as τοῦ πονηροῦ. These fiery darts are not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. The participle is indeed occasionally used of inflamed passions (2 Cor. xi. 29; 1 Cor. vii. 9); but that meaning is evidently unsuitable here. It scarcely needs to be proved that τοῦ πονηροῦ is masculine and not neuter. The idea of conflict on the part of armed soldiers implies a personal antagonist. The whole question of the use of the word ὁ πονηρός is admirably discussed in detail, in support of the rendering “the evil one” in the last petition of the Lord’s Prayer, in Chase’s treatise, *Texts and Studies*, I. iii. 71–161, 1891.¹ The darts are not man’s own inflamed and burning passions, but weapons wielded against man and hurled against him by the adversary. These burning darts, *malleoli*, were very commonly used in the wars both of Romans and of barbarians, and are very frequently referred to in classical writers, e.g. Livy, xlii. 64; Cicero, in *Cat.* i. 13, 32, etc. They were formed by twisting tow dipped in pitch round about the shaft that was to be hurled amid the ranks

¹ See also Lightfoot, *On a Fresh Revision of the New Testament*, 1891, Appendix II., on the last clause of the Lord’s Prayer, pp. 269–323; and in favour of the neuter rendering, Canon Cook, *Deliver us from evil*,—two pamphlets, 1881, 1882.

of the enemy. Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii. 14, describes them as cane arrows, with a head in the form of a distaff filled with lighted material. The figure thus describes Satan's attacks as deliberately made and skilfully devised, so as to be as destructive as possible. There may be also a reference to the panic which the showering of such missiles among the soldiers was fitted to produce. Thus the great enemy of man seeks to cause panic and confusion, and to arouse such alarm as will paralyse effort and unnerve the attacked, so that they may offer ineffective or no resistance. Against such panic-causing flaming darts of Satan, whether in the form of temptations or of persecutions, the only protection is the shield of faith. By it we are able to quench (σβέννυμι, used, and that in the figurative sense, elsewhere only in 1 Thess. v. 19) those fiery darts. When the spirit of faith meets them they lose all their power to work harm to the soul. Thus it was Christ's faith in God and His word that foiled Satan's temptations.

Ver. 17. *And receive the helmet of salvation.*—Though the construction is here changed from that with the participle to that with a finite verb, the clause is, in respect of the order of thought, still subordinate to the “stand ye” of ver. 14, and co-ordinate with the several clauses immediately preceding. The helmet which is here said to be salvation, that is the present possession of salvation, is described in 1 Thess. v. 8 as the hope of salvation, which means precisely the same (comp. Isa. lix. 19). This consciousness of salvation, which is a gospel hope, in the sense of a sure expectation, is the guarantee and pledge of victory. Theodore of Mopsuestia happily paraphrases the words of the apostle: “*Horum diligentiam adhibentes, habebitis illam salutem quæ est a Deo, quæ et progalea communicet vos; ita ut vulnem a diabolo in locis vivacibus minime percipiatis.*” Just as the helmet protects that part of the body upon which the blow of an assailant would be most likely to prove mortal, so the assured possession of salvation, the recognition of the fulness of Christ's redemption, as affording to us complete salvation, banishing as it does all doubts that would unnerve our spirits and bring the very chill of death into our hearts, will be a

sure protection against the blows aimed with deadly intent by our spiritual foe. This salvation, which imparts such confidence and such security, must be God's salvation. So the apostle says, "Receive ye (δέξασθε) the helmet which is salvation;" not merely take up or take to yourselves, but receive from the hand of another, that is, God.

And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.—Here we come upon the first and only weapon of attack in the whole list. All those previously named are weapons of defence. By the use of these we may hold our ground and prevent any attack of the enemy from inflicting any wound upon our own spiritual being. But while that is much, it is not enough. "The helmet, the shield, the breastplate, the belt, may be a protection for ourselves; but we belong to an army, and are fighting for the victory of the divine kingdom, and for the complete destruction of the authority and power of the spiritual hosts of wickedness over other men; it is not enough that our personal safety is provided for" (Dale). We have also, on our own behalf, to use measures whereby the enemy may be so disabled that he will not attempt, in that way at least, to renew his attack upon us.—The weapon with which we are to attack our enemy is the word of God. In the story of our Lord's temptation we see how, by His use of the word of God, He put an end to each particular temptation, so that by means of that word, as the sword of the Spirit, the tempter, in so far as the use of that form of temptation was concerned, was slain.—It is called the *sword of the Spirit*, because we *receive* it from the hand of the Spirit, and yet it is ever still in the hand of the Spirit. He it is who gives it to us, and He it is, by His indwelling presence, whose hand is with ours in the handling of this sword.—Those who regard "of the Spirit" as in apposition to "the sword," naturally understand "which" of the Spirit and not of the sword. According to this view, the apostle here speaks of the Holy Spirit in relation to man, as finding expression in the word of God. It is much simpler and more natural to connect it with "sword," and to interpret the phrase "of the Spirit," as we have done. This, too, is in accordance with the language of Heb. iv. 12. There is certainly no other

example of the identification of the Spirit and the word of God; but that the Spirit should convey that word to us and guide us in our use of it, is the universal teaching of Scripture.—It may be observed that *ῥῆμα Θεοῦ* means some particular utterance of God's word, and not, like *ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ*, the whole message of the gospel. It is here the special utterance of God's word fitted for use, and so made use of on some particular occasion and to meet some special emergency.

Ver. 18. *By means of every form of prayer and supplication, praying at every season.*—The apostle thus introduces a second subordinate section under the *στῆτε* of ver. 14, parallel with the passage, vers. 14–17. If we are to stand against the enemy, we must put on the armour described in detail, but we must also be careful to maintain our relationship with the God from whom we obtain the armour. We cannot use those weapons except in His fellowship, and this fellowship can be maintained only by the exercise of prayer. The injunction is to the cultivation of a spirit of prayer, which will find for itself expressions suitable for all occasions, whether of thanksgiving or confession, or petition or intercession. Of the two words used here, *προσευχή* is a general term indicating prayers of every sort; *δέσεις* is prayer in the special form of petition. Thus Calvin distinguishes them as respectively *precatio* and *rogatio*; and Bengel as *oratio* and *imploratio* (comp. Phil. iv. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 1, v. 5). See Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § li., pp. 188–189, 1886. If this spirit of prayer is to be maintained, it must be *unceasing*. If it were called into exercise only in time of need, then it would be only one kind of prayer, viz. supplication. Prayer must be *at every season*.

In the Spirit.—The reference of *ἐν πνεύματι* is to the Holy Spirit and not to the human spirit. The apostle could scarcely have deemed it necessary to pause at that point to say that this prayer must be hearty and sincere, and no mere lip utterance. This is already not only implied but really expressed in the requirement of every form of prayer at every season. But the apostle here adds something new when he

says that all prayer must be in the Holy Spirit. He must be the author in us of all true prayer ; it must be His living truth. Our crying to God, as Father, depends on our having received the Spirit of adoption (Rom. viii. 15). "Praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20).

To this end watching with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.—The words εἰς αὐτό refer back to the previous clause. The end to be served by the watching is the maintaining of the spirit and exercise of prayer just insisted upon. The urgent need of prayer is thus strikingly indicated by the extraordinary efforts to be made to secure that it be not intermitted. Be intent, says the apostle, upon this duty and exercise of prayer (comp. Col. iv. 2). This watchfulness is to be maintained by constantly living in an atmosphere of prayer, and by unfailing remembrance of our fellow-Christians. The word προσκαρτέρησις occurs nowhere else in Scripture. The verb προσκαρτέρειν in Col. iv. 2, etc., means to continue steadfast in. He who is diligent and persistent in the exercise of prayer, as personal devotion, will be mindful of the needs of his fellow-saints and the interests of the kingdom of God.—"Be stirred up to care prayerfully and practically for the advancement everywhere of the Lord's kingdom. Be concerned, be busy for the Lord. Let Satan find you ever pre-engaged, doing a great work, so that you cannot come down" (Candlish, *Discourses*, p. 356).

Ver. 19. *And for me that utterance be given in opening of my mouth.*—Supplication is to be not only for all saints, but especially and particularly for the apostle. There seems no reason to say, with Klöpper, that this is not what Paul would himself have claimed had he been himself the author of the epistle. He regards himself as representative of the missionary enterprise, and as having resting on him the care of all the churches. As thus considered, his claim cannot fairly be regarded as extravagant. In this clause the apostle shows what petition he would have constantly and fervently offered on his behalf. He desires that speech, or the faculty of speech, utterance (λόγος), may be given him of God, and that no hindrance may be permitted to check the liberty of his utterance. His opportunity will be found in this unhindered

opening of his mouth (*ἐν ἀνοίξει στόματος*) to give expression to his mind, and his desire is that then God would be a mouth and wisdom to him, so that he may fully take advantage of his opportunity. *Ἀνοιξίς* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Compare 2 Cor. vi. 11; 1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12.

To make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.—The mystery of the gospel is the mystery of which the gospel is the revelation. The gospel is that which was kept hidden through the ages, the truth of God's love for the world, which was never fully revealed until Christ came. Hence the coming of Christ was the revelation of the mystery, and by the preaching of the gospel the hidden mystery was made known. It was only as the mystery of the gospel that the mystery could be made known; and hence Paul's request is that the Ephesians should pray for him, that he should have liberty to preach the gospel as the proclamation of God's love. He further asks that they would petition on his behalf the removal of every hindrance to this work that might arise from any cause within himself. In the former clause his thought was about the removing of outward obstructions; here it is about restrictions from his own timidity and backwardness. "With boldness" (*ἐν παρρησίᾳ*) describes the attitude he desires to be able to maintain in presence of those who would stop his mouth. He would not be found yielding to intimidation, so as to cease preaching, or so as to modify the character of his preaching to meet the wishes and prejudices of men. He desires that he may be strengthened so as to declare unreservedly the whole counsel of God.

Ver. 20. *For which I am doing the work of an ambassador in a chain.*—The verb *πρεσβεύω* is found elsewhere in the New Testament only in 2 Cor. v. 20. He does not speak of his authority as being sent, but of the mission on which he is sent. He calls attention to the business about which he has to treat. His present position is that of the representative of an unpopular cause, for which he is made to answer (2 Tim. iv. 16). He was the representative of the mystery of the gospel. The treatment which he now endured was fitted to try his constancy and shake his confidence, and affords a

special reason for his request that the believers should pray that he might be able to speak *with boldness*. His position is one of honour. He is quite alive to the dignity which his commission gives him; and so in Philem. 9 we find him appealing to his rank as *πρεσβύτης* (which, as Lightfoot shows, was a recognised form of *πρεσβευτής* in the sense of ambassador) as giving him a claim to deference and respect. His being in chains (*ἐν ἀλύσει*) does not in the least detract from his dignity, but it caused timid and half-hearted professors to withdraw their countenance from him, and he himself needed much grace to enable him to think of his ambassadorship rather than of his bonds. How precious and helpful the sympathy of prayerful, faithful men was to the apostle, is shown by his own grateful petition on behalf of Onesiphorus, who had not been ashamed of his chain (*τὴν ἄλυσίν μου οὐκ ἐπαισχύνθη*).

That in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.—The *ἐν αὐτῷ*, “in it,” should not be referred, as is commonly done, to the preaching of the mystery of the gospel, but to the fulfilling the office of an ambassador. Prayer is to be made for him, that, being an ambassador, he may acquit himself well in his office by acting and speaking as he ought. If it were referred to the preaching, then the *παρρησιάζωμαι* of this clause would be a tautological repetition of the *ἐν παρρησίᾳ* of the previous verse. His present position was that described in 2 Tim. i. 16. He was to be called upon to plead for a great cause, and most naturally he asked to be supported in this difficult task, on the right discharge of which so much depended, by the prayers of the faithful. They were to pray that this imprisonment, and Paul’s bearing and defence when on his trial, might all be for the furtherance of the gospel (Phil. i. 12).

SECT. XI.—COMMISSION TO MESSENGER AND BENEDICTION (Chap. vi. 21-24).

Ver. 21-24. The apostle has now finished his letter. He finds it necessary, in closing, to explain what he felt would be regarded as singular, viz. the absence of all information

regarding his personal condition and circumstances. As might have been supposed, he was not overlooking this natural curiosity on the part of his friends, but had made provision, by means of a special trusty messenger, for affording them much ampler and more satisfactory information about his affairs than could possibly have been given in a letter. He commends Tychicus to them as the bearer of personal greetings, and the well-informed reporter who will be able to tell them about the apostle all that they may wish to know. Finally, he pronounces upon them a full and fervent benediction, in the prayer for spiritual increase in love and faith from God and Christ.

Ver. 21. *But that ye also may be informed of my affairs and how I fare.*—Other churches had been in direct communication with Paul during the course of his imprisonment, and had been kept informed of all that befell their teacher from time to time, but the apostle now undertook to place the Ephesians in possession of the same information. “Ye also” may thus be fairly interpreted as referring to those who might have had better opportunities of receiving tidings from time to time of the circumstances of the apostle, and especially of the prospects of the cause of the gospel as represented by him. “I have made arrangements,” says Paul, “whereby ye Ephesians will obtain this desired intelligence.” The *καί*, “also,” is almost invariably explained as referring to Col. iv. 7. But this is quite gratuitous, seeing that no other allusion of any kind to the Colossian letter is found in our epistle, and, without further explanation, such an allusion as is thus supposed, depending as it does on our acquaintance with the Epistle to the Colossians, would be utterly unintelligible to the Ephesians.

Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, shall make all things known to you.—Tychicus, a native of Asia, and probably an Ephesian, is mentioned besides in Acts xx. 4; Col. iv. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 12; Titus iii. 12. The description of Tychicus here is precisely the same as in Col. iv. 12, with the exception that the term *σύνδουλος* there used is here omitted. We need not, with Von Soden, suppose that the writer, being himself a disciple of Paul, found that by the

use of this title he might be putting Tychicus too much on an equality with the apostle. Paul's use of the word led to its being employed by bishops in later times, as, *e.g.*, by Ignatius, to describe the status of a deacon. Its omission in our text may rather be accounted for by the supposition that, as one of themselves, Tychicus did not require the same full and formal recommendation to the Ephesians as he did to the Colossians.

Ver. 22. *Whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs.*—The purpose of the sending of Tychicus is expressed in exactly the same terms as in Col. iv. 8. It is a reiteration of the statement made in introducing the name of Tychicus, with this addition, that this was the express object in view in his mission. This emphasis (εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο) is intended to assure the Ephesians of the very special interest which the apostle had in them, and of his belief that they were interested in no ordinary degree in what concerned him. It would have been most unnatural to expect that scattered communities of diverse churches, some of them possessing only a very slight acquaintance with the apostle, perhaps no personal acquaintance at all, should be so eager and concerned to know all the details about his circumstances and expectations. That he should write this to the Ephesians, anxious to prevent any suspicion of indifference toward them, or the idea that he entertained any fear that they had become indifferent towards him, is just what we might have expected.

And that he may encourage your heart.—Just as in Col. iv. 8 and 2 Thess. ii. 17, so also here, παρακαλέσῃ means to encourage to perseverance by the news which he brought of the apostle's work and spirit. In the sense of imparting strength, παρακαλεῖν is used in LXX. of "weak hands" and "feeble knees" (Job iv. 3; Isa. xxxv. 3). It does not mean "to impart consolation." The tale of Paul's sufferings, when told in connection with the unfaltering courage which he everywhere displayed, and his unfailing maintenance of faith in God, would restore their courage and confirm their faith. For this end, and not for personal glorification, Paul would have his story told.

Ver. 23. *Peace to the brethren, and love with faith.*—The apostle is writing to the faithful, and so, in his closing greeting, he assumes that they have faith, but expresses the wish that their faith may be accompanied, as it should be, by the graces of peace and love. It is evident that the peace here intended is peace among themselves as brethren, and that love is not the love of God manifested toward them, but the Christian grace of brotherly love, which is the only true basis of peace in the community. By faith in Christ they are members of one body, and as such they are ideally one in love, and are at peace among themselves. The apostle's benediction is his wish for the realisation, on the part of the Ephesians, of this ideal.

From God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.—These words describe, like chap. i. 2, the source of all the graces of the Christian life. We have here the primary source in God the Father, then the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Head over all things to the churches (i. 22).

Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.—This final greeting stands alone in this respect, that it is expressed in the third person. It cannot, however, be said to imply that the epistle is addressed not to a particular community but to believers generally. In Colossians and the Pastoral Epistles, grace, as here, is the blessing invoked, to be interpreted undoubtedly of the grace of God in Christ, as in most other epistles. It is invoked on behalf of those who are in a position to receive and enjoy it. The grace of God is known of those who are redeemed and who are looking for the coming of the Saviour (Titus ii. 11-14). Those who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ are anathema (1 Cor. xvi. 22). The crown is for those who love His appearing (2 Tim. iv. 8).

Incorruptibly.—The words *ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ* have caused considerable difficulty. They have been connected by some with the principal proposition, "grace be with all," as characterising the grace; by others with "the Lord Jesus Christ;" and by others with "all who love." It seems much more natural to attach these words to the participial phrase, *μετὰ τῶν ἀγαπώντων*, as characterising the love which can be recognised as worthy of the grace. It seems unnecessary to add anything to grace in order to define its nature; for it is a term

already distinctly understood by all the readers of the epistle, and with them there was not the slightest danger of confusion in their understanding of it. The same, too, may be said of the Lord Jesus Christ. It would be most unsuitable in the closing words of such an epistle, in which so much had been said of the grace of God and of the person of Jesus Christ, to introduce a qualifying phrase like *ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ* to characterise the one or the other. But what would be distinctly inappropriate in either of those places, is precisely what is needed to remove all uncertainty and determine accurately the range to which this benediction extends. It is pronounced upon all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, but this love is not in word, and it is not the fleeting emotion of excited feeling, but it is an imperishable affection.—Then as to the meaning of the word *ἀφθαρσία* there should be little trouble. It occurs altogether six times elsewhere in the New Testament (1 Cor. xv. 42, 50, 53, 54; Rom. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 10; the correct reading in Titus ii. 7 is *ἀφθορία*), and in all these places it means a condition secured against decay and dissolution. This is clearly the meaning in the passage before us. The benediction is upon those who love Christ with an incorruptible love. They love Him who first loved them; and this love, which they have experienced and which has produced their love, has imparted to them and to their love that same incorruptibility which belongs to Him and to His love. Their love is not of the earth earthy. It is heavenly, of heavenly origin and of heavenly quality. That love which is of Christ and in Christ can know no decay.

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